

Newsletter

For Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc.

No 36, Spring 1998

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President's Comment

Dear Friends

We have a new financial year, a full committee and a lot of exciting projects and challenges.

Congratulations to Carl McMahon, the winner of the 1998 Staff Award. He is a very valuable and versatile member of the Botanic Gardens' staff. One of his prominent projects is the new gate at the kiosk entrance to the Gardens.

Our next project is the annual October Plant Sale and we hope to involve a lot of members, setting up, selling, keeping stalls stocked, cleaning up, and answering customers queries.

There are two teams busy in the potting shed each week and as "Many hands make light work", we are grateful for all that assistance.

Do note the dates and times of future meetings and walks, as these are opportunities for all members to participate.

The Magnolia Campbellii will probably finish flowering before this goes to print but do check out the magnolia section soon.

Good gardening.

Faye Fleming

Botanic Gardens Jottings

The winter, or the lack of a traditional winter, has been a talking point in Christchurch. Certainly, we have experienced less rainfall and had warmer temperatures than normal. The result has been for many of our spring flowering plants to be in flower three to four weeks earlier than usual.

One of the most spectacular shrubby trees in spring is Magnolia Campbellii, and this year it has been exceptional. This year it commenced flowering in mid July and one month later it is in full flower, with only minor frost damage to some upper flowers.

Spring is undoubtedly the favoured season in the garden for many people. There is so much of interest to see, from large deciduous trees bursting bud, through to tiny bulbous plants breaking through the soil with their colourful flowers.

Conservatories - Cuningham House

Friends will be aware of the rockwork and water features which were constructed in Cuningham House in 1997. This work was in accordance with the Botanic Gardens Management plan, to create a more realistic background for the range of tropical plants.

Currently work is being completed on the pathway system at ground level to create a more natural looking surface complimentary to the rock and water environment.

Botanic Gardens Management Plan

Staff are continuing to work in the various sections in accordance with the documents policies. A steady supply of seed is being introduced through the

FCBG

PO Box 237
Christchurch

Index Seminum, to produce plants for the future geographical collections. Palms have recently been moved to the Potts Lawn, planning work is well advanced for the Azalea garden which is to be redeveloped and there are to be extensive alterations to the Camellia collection as many of these specimens are relocated.

Robert McDougall Art Gallery

With the future move of the Art Gallery to the new site in Worcester Boulevard, a submission has been prepared by staff in conjunction with Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. This will be considered by the Christchurch City Council in determining the future use of this building.

Use of part or all of this building by the Botanic Gardens in the future would allow huge expansion of the Botanic Gardens profile, its education outreach capability, along with opportunities for lectures, meetings, herbarium, library, archives, scientific research, product sales etc.

The future can provide us with exciting opportunities.

Warwick Scadden
Horticultural Operations Team Leader

Coming Events

In Brief...		
Guided Walks 1998		
1 September	Tuesday	9:00am
19 September	Saturday	1:30pm
6 October	Tuesday	9:00am
17 October	Saturday	1:30pm
3 November	Tuesday	9:00am
21 November	Saturday	1:30pm
1 December	Tuesday	9:30am
Other Events		
5 September	Saturday	10:30am
16 September	Wednesday	7:30pm
21 September	Monday	2:00pm
3/4 October	Sat/Sun	9:00am
7 October	Wednesday	
18 November	Wednesday	7:30pm
24 November	Tuesday	2:00pm
4 December	Friday	5:00pm

The topics for these walks are:

- 19 September "Spring in the Gardens"
- 17 October "Flowering Cherries and similar trees and shrubs"
- 21 November "Maples, Sycamores and Box Elders"

Other Events

5 September

Garden Visit - Lincoln University

We will see the largest collection of Magnolias in the South Island and some 17 species of Viburnum. The tour will be conducted by Roy Edwards. He picks this date as the best time to see the collection. It will conclude at midday approximately and will proceed wet or fine. We will meet at 10:30am at the carpark adjacent to the library building. Enter from the main entrance on Ellesmere Junction Road. All members and prospective members are welcome. You will be asked for a small donation - \$2 each. Please advise D Morse, ph 332-6184, if you are coming and your name is not already on the list circulated at the A.G.M. Please also indicate if transport is needed or offered.

Deryck Morse

16 September

7:30pm in the Information Centre

Kevin Garnett's and Ray Edward's Annual Quiz. This is always interesting and is a fun evening. You are promised an enjoyable time.

Guided Walks

1 September, 6 October, 3 November, 1 December

These Tuesday walks begin from the Information Centre at 9:00am and are taken by a Botanic Gardens staff member. They are enjoyable and well worth attending.

Max Visch is in charge of the Saturday 1:30pm walks which begin from the Information Centre.

Coming Events continued ...**21 September**

2:00pm in the Information Centre

Peggy Kelly, partner of our own Bill Sykes, speaks about the St Albans Packe Street Park; the first of a kind, a neighbourhood park and garden.

3/4 October - The Big One!

Plant Sale on Half Moon lawn in front of the Kiosk. Saturday and Sunday 9:00am start. Read Bill Russell's "Preparing for the Annual Plant Sale" following:

Preparing for the Annual Plant Sale

Each Tuesday and Thursday morning small groups members go to the "Friends" glasshouse in the Botanic Gardens to prepare plant material for the annual October sale to the public.

This is very much a "hands on" activity for the enthusiasts involved - mostly breaking up large clumps of perennials, selecting suitable portions to use, and then bagging or potting these in compost to grow on to saleable size. Next comes labelling of each item, with close attention given to correct naming and colour coding, and then transfer of "production" in trays to outside storage areas. There are already many hundreds of items in stock, and numbers are growing rapidly as spring growth advances and more material becomes available.

In addition to perennials in all their forms, from ground covers to giant Gunnera, we handle cuttings, bulbs, annuals, shrubs and small trees. All material is required to be of good saleable quality and to conform with preset standards.

The great bulk of our plant material comes from Botanic Garden surpluses, plus some items of special interest from members' own gardens. The compost, planter bags, pots, labels etc. we use are supplied by the Gardens - members supply the dedicated labour - and learn much about plants and propagation in the process.

Overall supervision and technical "know-how" is in the expert hands of Max Visch and Maria Adamski. Jane McArthur leads the Thursday team and the writer the Tuesday group.

Bill Russell

7 October

2:00pm in the Information Centre

Frank Harvey, a well known speaker, talks on "Miniature Bonsai, without drainage".

18 November

7:30pm in the Information Centre

Cullen Pope speaks on "Landscape Development Theme". Cullen is a forceful, entertaining speaker.

24 November

2:00pm

A Tuesday visit to Edmonds Factory Garden with Mary Plunkett. Meet in the carpark off Ferry Road on the city side of the garden. Any enquiries ring Adrienne Moore ph 351-5915.

4 December

5:00pm

The Friends end of the year Xmas Function. Mark it in your calendar.

Reminders about these events appear during the preceding week in the Christchurch Press Weekend Edition gardening pages under the heading of "Cuttings" and in the Christchurch Star "Around Town" columns.

Plants in the Service of People

The island of Madagascar has a unique flora, a high percentage of which is endemic. The plants of Madagascar are the focus of research to identify plants which are medicinally useful for important cures in the future.

The Madagascar Periwinkle (*Catharanthus rosea*) produces an anticancer alkaloid, called leurocristine, which is used to treat childhood leukaemia.

This island, which has as many different plants as Europe, has only one botanical garden. Its long isolation has resulted in about 8,000 endemic species. Unfortunately large tracts have been laid waste placing many species in danger.

Bits & Pieces

The years of work by Gavin Halliburton in preparing the printed labels for the "Friends" Newsletter was given recognition at the AGM on 9 August 1998. This work will now be prepared on the computer in the Information Centre.

Changes to the committee were as follows:

Faye Fleming was elected as President for a second year. The "Friends" now have a vice-president who is Dennis Preston. Two new committee members were elected. These were Valya Pavluk and Ruby Coleman. Ruby, who is membership secretary, is now also a member of the committee. Adrienne Moore has stepped down from committee after serving since the beginning of the "Friends of the B.G." A special vote of thanks was made for her many years of devoted service.

Raffle

The raffle winner of "Gardening with Camellias" by Jim Rolfe was Ailsa Morrow.

Wanted by the Friends

If anyone has a regular sized card folding up table they do not need, the Friends would be pleased to have or purchase it. Needed by September. Ring Adrienne Moore on 351-5915.

What's On Display at the Information Centre

September: A photographic display and recycled wooden containers, which are for sale. Painting,

pottery and bone carving from New Zealand, New Caledonia and China.

October: A display on Phormiums (N.Z. flax) by former "Friends of B.G." president Warwick Harris. Different cultivars and products from - such as paper and weaving.

Spring - September and October: Displays covering woodland daffodils, rock garden and Alpine photos and general information.

October and November: Rhododendrons and camellias; includes Kate Sheppard Walk.

Subscriptions

For the first time since the Friends beginning, has been necessary to raise the annual subscriptions. The rise was passed at the A.G.M. on 9 August 1998. New rates are:

Single	\$12.00
Family	\$18.00
Associate	\$12.00
Student	\$6.00

Members are reminded that subs are due for payment before 30 November 1998 and should be paid to:

The Treasurer
 Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens
 PO Box 237
 Christchurch

Feature Articles

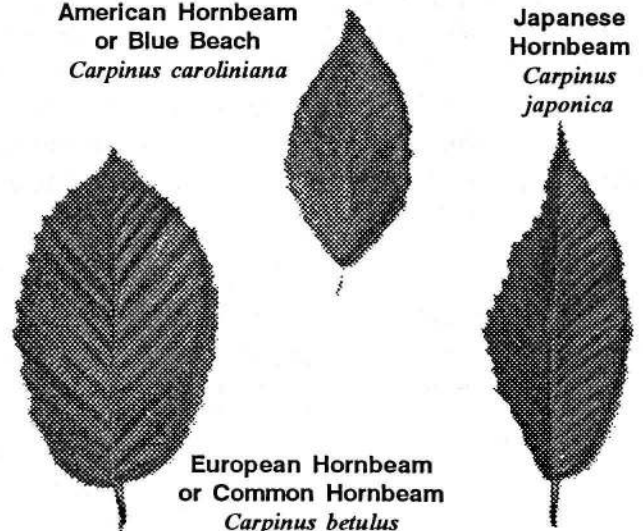
The Hornbeam - A Tree with a Fascinating History

A well grown specimen of the common European hornbeam, *Carpinus betulus* can be seen on the edge of Potts Lawn, beside the Information Centre. The trunk is smooth, pale grey and deeply fluted, denoting maturity.

Not a well known tree to members of the public. If it is noticed at all it is likely to be passed over as some kind of beech. Yet the hornbeam is an interesting and useful tree. Its past history is notable because it was one of the last trees to re-enter England after the last ice age before the land bridge with Europe was eroded away by rising sea levels, some 6,000 years ago.

American Hornbeam
 or Blue Beach
Carpinus caroliniana

Japanese
 Hornbeam
Carpinus japonica



About 12,000 years or so ago there were almost no trees in Britain, glacial ice extended south to at least London and south of this was glacial outwash and tundra. The hornbeam had therefore some 6,000 years to migrate to England where it is found growing naturally wild only in the southeast and perhaps west to Somerset.

The hornbeam has leaves which turn yellow in autumn, then orange-brown. The leaves have fine sharp teeth and prominent parallel veins.

The flowers open in spring and the male catkins are up to 5cm long, yellowish and drooping. The female catkins are small, green, and at the tops of the shoots. The fruits are small nuts with large conspicuous bracts. Unlike the *Betula* or birch, and *Alnus*, or alder; the male catkins remain enclosed in a bud through the winter.

The hornbeams chief claim to fame is its bone-hard wood, so hard that before iron became plentiful and cheap, it was used for cogwheels in mills, and for the hard bearing parts of machines, e.g. wheel hubs which had holes for the spokes, and for the spokes themselves. The wood still has a use as piano hammers and butchers' chopping blocks, where the hornbeam centre is set in beech-wood which is softer and wears away to leave the raised centre required for chopping meat.

The genus *Carpinus* - the Latin or Roman name for the tree - has some twenty six species, all deciduous and widely spread in the Northern Hemisphere. The geographical range is through Europe, south of Sweden and east into Asia Minor, northeast and central China, Japan, Korea and America. It is this wide, vast range which has given rise to the many different species.

Peter Mahan

A Staff Profile from Richard Poole - Gardener Section C

Being the gardener for Section C of the Christchurch Botanic Garden is something that gives me a large amount of pride. For those that don't know where Section C is, then this summary of features should help.

The Heritage Rose garden, Daffodil Woodland, Primula garden, Harmons Grove, all being on the southern side of the Avon River, running alongside Riccarton Avenue. Within the river boundary of the Botanic Gardens the section includes the large Rhododendron border by the Edward Albert Oak, *Cistus* border and *Ilex* triangle along the riverwalk.

I have been employed with the Botanic Gardens for just over three years. During this time there has been a major extension to the Primula garden area, turning a dangerous unsightly drain into a terraced garden area. Built during winter 1996 by Works Operations, this area is being progressively planted with a collection of *Viburnum* species and cultivars. It also has extended the area for planting Primula, which are a major feature of this garden.

The Heritage Rose garden area will in the next year or two be redeveloped. This will hopefully give the area more room to increase the collection of heritage roses and companion plants.

The Rhododendron border along the riverwalk will be redefined to include only New Zealand raised Rhododendron cultivars. This will be done progressively, planting new plants as space becomes available within the border.

The Daffodil Woodland has over the last three years been extended into a small area of Harmons Grove. These plantings being clearly seen from Riccarton Avenue.

To me, Section C is in a unique situation within the Botanic Gardens as it has the ability to have developments go ahead in accordance with the management plan without the problems of changing existing plantings to allow for redevelopment work to take place. This is due to the undeveloped nature of parts of the section.

My own interests run nearly parallel with my work as I have a keen interest in Rhododendrons, Primula, Woodland plants and horticulture generally. I also have a keen interest in Alpine plants. I am the convenor of the New Zealand Alpine Garden Society Spring Alpine Show and am on the publishing committee for that society's bulletin. I am also the Vice President for this society.

Other parts of my work include being a trainer/assessor for the horticultural apprentices employed at the gardens.

I feel very lucky to be employed at a botanic garden as I believe it offers a unique working life where you have the ability to develop new plant collections of benefit in education, horticulturally and botanically for public enjoyment. I have input into training and to work in a field that is immensely rewarding - working with plants.

"Nothing would be done at all if a man waited until he could do it so well that no one would find fault with it."

— John Henry Newman

Contact Numbers

President	Faye Fleming	351-7798	Committee Members	Maria Adamski	366-1701
Vice President	Dennis Preston	351-4131		Roy Edwards	338-5969
Immediate Past President	David Given	351-6069		Tony Burnett	384-1381
Minutes Secretary	Jim Crook	358-5845		Brenda Childs	382-2451
Treasurer	Colin Neal	359-8080		Lynn Heaton	355-7563
Membership Secretary	Ruby Coleman	355-8811		Cullen Pope	025-280-4429
Newsletter	Peter Mahan	354-1550		Susan Molloy	366-1701
Walks/Guiding	Max Visch	338-2273		Valya Pavluk	388-5755
Garden Tours	Deryck Morse	332-6184			
Ex Officio	Warwick Scadden	366-1701			
	Richard Doyle	366-1701			

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