

# Newsletter

For Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc  
To Promote, Protect, & Preserve

No 53, Summer 2002

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Coming Events

### President's Notes

On September 7th around fifty Friends and invited guests gathered for breakfast at the Kiosk then walked over to the Arbour in the Children's playground, for the official opening. [Guests included - Councillors Carole Anderton and Chrissy Williams, Anne Greenup, (Manager Parks and Waterways), Aileen Ginders and her son Richard Lewis from Maison Rouge and Guy Grant from the Christchurch Star.]

Carole Anderton officially uncovered the plaque and declared the area open. She thanked the Friends for their support for the Gardens and strongly urged us to continue to help the Council raise the profile of the Gardens and keep this unique asset as the Jewel in the Crown of our Garden City of the World.

The Arbor was the Friends' millennium project designed to provide shade for families in the Children's playground. An amount of just over \$33,700 was contributed by the Friends which represents many, many plants and raffle tickets sold over several years. It is great to see so many people using the area and again a huge thank you to everyone involved.

October is Plant Sale time. This year it was delayed a fortnight and the plants were certainly bigger and very healthy. There is a lot more competition now, so we need to look very carefully at the organisation and the advertising. Thank you everyone who helped. This is what being "A Friend" is all about.

Craig Oliver the Botanic Gardens' Team Manager has taken early retirement for health reasons. An interim manager is being appointed until the permanent position is advertised and the appointment made. Craig we wish you well in your retirement.

There is a wonderful display on at "Our City" corner Worcester Blvd and Oxford Tce. It is to highlight the history, future and the issues for Christchurch as a Garden City. The Botanic Gardens have a superb section.

Do take note of our coming events as we work hard at catering to "Friends" needs.

Happy gardening, and do check out the roses in the Central Rose Garden and in the Heritage Rose garden across the woodland bridge.

Faye

# Seasons

# Greetings



**FCBG**  
PO Box 2553  
Christchurch

# Gardens' News

To keep up with all the exciting seasonal changes we need to visit the Gardens almost weekly. The dramatic new growth on the ferns in the New Zealand section is very noticeable this year. The Rose gardens are looking wonderful and do not miss the Heritage roses and the under planting of perennials. This area was recently developed with a bequest from Betty Hilda Bennett. Such generosity allows new projects and additions to the plant collections in our Gardens.

The recent hailstorm damaged many of the larger leafed plants especially around the Water Garden and woodland garden.

Particularly noticeable this spring is the wonderful range of colour in the new leaves especially on the trees. The City Care tree team comes in 2 days every second week to attend to tree care under instructions from Bede Nottingham the Grounds Co-ordinator.

The old ailing *Araucaria araucana* (Monkey Puzzle) on the northern side of the maple border, has been removed. It will be missed as it grew near to another *Araucaria*, the New Zealand Kauri but another beautifully shaped young monkey puzzle is thriving in the Pinetum near the Riccarton Ave-Tennis Court car park.

Trial bedding plots are now at the Information Centre end of the Observatory lawn and the former trial plot area returned to lawn.

Greg Salton, Conservatory Co-ordinator specializes in tuberous begonias and his developments always provide a breath-taking display in summer in the Townend house.

As summer comes along the Herbaceous border will be full of colour and interest. The half of the border nearest the Museum displays herbaceous perennial cultivars and the western end of the border species.

A pair of paradise ducks are nesting in the woodlands and the large male certainly stands out

from the other ducks on the river bank. Another pair have settled in the Victoria lake area. The new bridge from the Armagh St car park will be open shortly and give much improved access, especially to wheelchairs and pushchairs. Recent maintenance work has been completed on the Peacock Fountain and a new filter and chlorination unit added.

The New Zealand Community Trust Art and Industry Urban Arts Biennial 2002 has three exhibits in the Gardens until 30 November. Look for the Kotuku (White Heron) in the Water Garden by Caroline Rothwell, the Aeolian Harp on the Archery lawn by Chris Cree-Brown and Humored, little creatures amongst the vegetation, in Cuningham House by Ani O'Neill

### New Entrance to Botanic Gardens.

Crispin Schurr an architect with City Solutions Christchurch City Council, is currently going through an exercise of evaluating the possibility of replacing a number of old administrative and staff buildings in the Gardens with a new purpose built facility. The new building could include such things as staff facilities, information and interpretive centre, lecture rooms, library, shop, and a home for the Friends. The building could also be the centrepiece for people entering the Gardens. It sounds exciting but is really only at the scoping stage. Crispin will be meeting with the Friends to get our thoughts and feedback on the project.

**Christmas Party  
6th December  
Townend House  
5.30 pm - 7 pm**



Please bring a plate of finger food to share, plus a small wrapped potted plant from your own garden or small garden gift (e.g. packet of seeds) for plant lucky dip. Drinks at own cost.

### Committee Member Changes

Consequent upon other heavy commitments Colin Neal has resigned from the Friends' Committee and from the position of Treasurer. Faye Fleming, as President of the Committee said that Colin's resignation had been accepted with understanding but with considerable regret because the Committee would miss his wealth of background knowledge and experience in Friends' affairs. Colin had been elected to the Committee and became Treasurer for the Friends soon after the Society was formed and had looked after the Friends' finances most ably since then. Fortunately Colin would still have time to help with some of the Friends' activities such as successfully operating the stall selling fertiliser and garden stakes at the recent Plant Sale.

Faye Fleming was, however, pleased to advise that Alison Fox - a current member of the Committee who has been responsible for arranging a number of enjoyable tours for the Friends - had agreed to take over the additional duties of Treasurer.

Amanda Childs retired from the Committee as from the Annual General Meeting in August because of difficulty in attending meetings. Faye Fleming paid tribute to the work done by Amanda while a member of the Committee. Amanda was a willingly back scenes worker who was always available to help in the varying activities of the Friends. Her services would also be missed.

## Recent Events

### Plant and Bulb Sales

The Committee is very grateful for the contributions of so many members who helped to make the plant and bulb sales successful fund raising activities again this year. These include the people who over many months, gathered, prepared, potted, nurtured and labelled both plants and bulbs for the respective sales. Additionally others whose work was most appreciated are those who co-ordinated, advertised and administered all the essential arrangements for the sale including last but not least those who worked long hours selling plants and bulbs on sales days, and in cleaning up afterwards. Fortunately fine warm weather made for pleasant conditions on sales days.

The collective efforts of members were rewarded by the interest of the many discerning customers who went away with bargains in well presented good quality plants and bulbs. The net proceeds from both sales realised just over \$6,500 which was a good result particularly in view of the many other competing sales outlets. Plants left over from sale day have since been offered for sale outside the Information Centre.

### Spring Outing

On a lovely sunny day, the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, forty four members and friends left the Gardens car park at 10 am on a bus trip to Rangiora. The first stop was Elizabeth Wolff's beautiful garden in Golf links Rd.

We were treated to a most interesting guided walk around the very large garden, much of it designed along a woodland theme, with many beautiful large old trees under planted with camellias and rhododendrons, as well as many other exotic and unusual shrubs and interesting ground covers. Further on we entered the daffodil walk, with bluebells and snowdrops also planted amongst the many different nut and fruit trees. Then on to a lovely walk along the bank of the Cam River and across the paddocks to its source.

The group enjoyed their lunch in the pleasant surroundings of the house and garden, including a very productive vegetable section, before heading off to the Giller's tree nursery.

We wandered through the fascinating wilderness collection of native trees and shrubs planted in areas

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suited to their growing requirements and Miles explained the philosophy upon which he and Gillian have developed their property. Gillian showed those who preferred an easier walk, the large lawn area planted with many exotic trees especially oaks, rhododendrons, camellias, roses and the lovely small leafed natives around their home.

From the Gillers we drove to the Woodend Anglican Church Spring flower show and everyone spent some time admiring the displays of the most unusual and beautiful daffodils, and other spring flowers. Local residents also had exhibits of Art, craft and cooking.

At 4 pm we were back at the Gardens' car park after a very pleasant day out.

Alison Fox.

### **Rhododendrons with Brian Coker 16 October 2002**

Brian Coker has been a member of the Canterbury Rhododendron Society for many years and is an enthusiastic grower and photographer of these wonderful plants. He was one of the editors of the handbook "Crossing the Rubicon, New Zealand raised Rhododendrons" published in 1998 by the Canterbury Rhododendron Society. This is a very valuable resource giving the history and on going work on Rhododendrons in New Zealand with particular emphasis on Canterbury. Brian's extensive knowledge comes from his own experience and connection with his uncle Ron Coker, well known for continuing the hybridizing work which his wife Mollie had started. (Their extensive garden at 129 Ilam Rd is now part of the Canterbury University campus.)

A wide range of rhododendrons growing in Brian's garden were discussed, from the tiniest to one with very large leaves, to many more shown on his slides. We learnt about the process of registering hybrids and tips for caring for rhododendrons in our own gardens.

The Canterbury Rhododendron Society collection at Orton Bradley Park has a wide range of

Rhododendrons and plants that enjoy similar conditions and is well worth a visit. Christchurch Botanic Gardens and the Ilam Gardens are very colourful especially during October and November when both the Rhododendrons and Azaleas are a feature.

Botanists now agree that rhododendrons and azaleas are the same genus in the Ericaceae family, but 'azalea' is still used as the common name for some of the smaller evergreen and deciduous species and many hybrids. Azalea comes from the Greek word azaleos, meaning dry and referring to the arid habitat of some species. Rhododendron also of Greek origin means rose tree.

A reminder from the RHS A to Z of Garden Plants "The nectar of some rhododendron flowers may cause severe discomfort if ingested" and all parts of the plants are poisonous. In the countryside care must be taken not to allow stock access to these plants or the prunings.

Useful references for rhododendron lovers:

From local author and plantswoman Margaret Tapley, "Rhododendrons in New Zealand", David Bateman, Auckland 1989, ISBN 0-908610-90-4.

An American reference: "Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendron Species and Hybrids", Harold E Greer, Offshoot Publications, Eugene Oregon 1996, ISBN: 0-910013-15-5 Or 0-910013-06-3 (Wonderful photography but many plants not available here).

### **Raffle Results**

We are most grateful to Marjorie and Deryck Morse and Barbara de Lambert who have all been very generous to the Friends over many years especially with their donations of plants and books for raffle prizes. These always attract eager raffle customers and give delight to the winners.

At our recent plant sale winners were:

Book Prize - Audrey Bush

Bowl of Rhodohypoxis - 2 prizes A McDowell and Irene McBride.

Thank you to all who participated.

## Articles

### Seasonal tasks for Rhododendrons in October and November and Dr Rhododendron.

By now you may be deadheading early flowering plants. Some brave people do their triflorums with hedge cutters - why not try one side.

Pruning of large rhododendrons can take place through October and November and gives new shooting growth before next winter. When chatting with Denis Hughes recently, we discussed cutting back large plants affected by powdery mildew. He commented that if a plant has struggled for some time it maybe depleted and unable to respond as you wish, but is always worth a try.

The most important element for good rhododendron health is to plan ahead and attempt to prevent rather than try to cure. Many of us are reluctant to use insecticides widely in the garden, if at all....do only spray when needed. You need to be vigilant about thrips and powdery mildew. These are not big problems if you make them part of everyday garden life and mark your calendar with tasks to be attended.

**Thrips.** Shield is good also Orthene. Spray when the new foliage is fully formed about late November and then about every six weeks during summer. Once the leaves are silvered, nothing will fix them, other than picking off. Spraying summer oil beneath the leaves of an infected plant will suffocate live thrips and over-wintering eggs. Look around the garden for host plants - if they are not precious you may save yourself work eventually by removal. A large group of thrip-prone seedlings was removed from OBP (Orton Bradley Park) last year.

Joy Talbot suggests for non-toxic remedies try insecticidal soap, neem oil, garden sulphur, baking soda and horticultural oil.

**Powdery mildew**, which is genus specific and

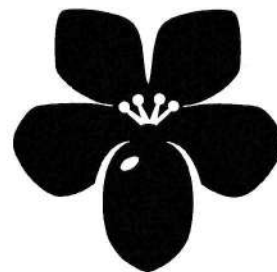
arrived in New Zealand during the 1980s, is found in the wild. You must spray new growth in the spring. Super Sulphur (wetable) is good (not lime sulphur), or you could use a systemic such as Saprol or Saprene. Farmers may find many of the agricultural chemicals work very well in the garden situation.

Affected old leaves cannot be fixed. What you can do is gather up and burn (not compost) the dropped leaves and also remove any badly affected plants. Some plants such as *R. 'Virginia Richards'*, *R. 'Lady Chamberlain'* and *R. 'Lady Roseberry'*, the lovely *cinnabarinum* hybrids, could/should be removed unless you wish to make their health your life's work.

If you have a rhododendron which has ceased flowering, with leaves getting smaller, sparse and dropping, then you may have this problem. The first sign is some round or irregular discoloration, usually pale green or yellow on the upper leaf surface soon accompanied by white, grey or brown powdery patches on the lower leaf surface.

This can happen to high vigor well-known plants such as *R. 'Unique'*, as a garden matures and a more humid and sheltered garden situation develops. Alan Trott suggests it may be possible to improve air circulation. Joy Talbot suggests baking soda (1-2 tsp. per litre) and horticultural oil which also aids sticking. Spraying under leaves is essential. Good luck."

This article is reprinted with permission from the Canterbury Rhododendron Society's October newsletter.



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### The Monarch Butterfly

The Monarch butterfly begins its life in the egg, as other insects do. But it doesn't hatch directly from the egg into the adult form, as a spider does. It goes through a process called metamorphosis. This means it will change its shape as it becomes first a caterpillar, then a chrysalis, and last of all, a butterfly.

The process of metamorphosis begins right back at the egg. As the cells develop inside the egg one group forms the base of the caterpillar stage. The other cells form the base of the chrysalis and butterfly. This means the baby caterpillar forming inside the egg has two separate growth patterns.

Monarch butterfly eggs are usually laid on the undersides of the swan plant leaves. They are sheltered there from storms and from the hot sun, and the baby caterpillar can grow inside the egg in safety.

When they hatch the tiny Monarch butterfly caterpillars will eat their empty eggshells. When they finish the shells they begin eating the leaves. They like those of the swan plant better than any others. They eat all the time and they grow very quickly. The skin grows, too, but not as quickly as the caterpillar does. This means the caterpillar has to get rid of its old skin several times. When the skin feels tight the caterpillar stops eating for a day or two. Then it begins to jerk. Suddenly its skin bursts at the head, and the caterpillar wriggles out, wearing a new and larger one. It begins eating again, and soon it needs a still larger skin to fit it. Every time it gets rid of the old skin the caterpillar is bigger than it was before.

At last it is fully grown, and ready for the next stage, the chrysalis. It uses its mouth to spin a thin silk mat with a silk stalk projecting from it. The caterpillar grips this stalk with its last pair of legs and hangs from it upside down. Its black and yellow stripes grow dull. Underneath the skin the caterpillar forms a cover to protect the soft part of its body. When this cover is ready it bursts through the skin. It wriggles a few times to push the dry skin up out of the way, and this soon falls off.

The caterpillar is now a chrysalis, growing into a butterfly in its green shell. It hangs there quite still, but inside more changes are taking place. The cells that controlled the caterpillar stage begin to die, and those that control the butterfly stage put on a spurt of growth. The dead cells are used as food for the butterfly cells developing in the chrysalis. As the old tissues break down and new ones build up, the contents of the chrysalis become mainly liquid – a “soup” in which new life is created.

Everything changes. The stumpy legs of the caterpillar are replaced by the long slender legs of the butterfly. Its mouthparts, made for chewing, are replaced by the long curled tongue the Monarch butterfly will use to suck nectar from the flowers. Four wings develop.

As the butterfly grows the colour of the chrysalis changes. The shell becomes darker, and the colour of the folded wings can be seen plainly. In about three weeks the butterfly is ready to hatch out from the chrysalis. It usually waits for a sunny day, then the chrysalis breaks open and the butterfly emerges.

At first it's helpless, as it hangs soft and limp with its wings like small folded parachutes, it pumps fluid from its body into its wings, and gradually they dry and become firm and strong. It opens and closes them a few times as it gets the feel of its new wings. Then, transformed from a fat and greedy caterpillar into a richly coloured Monarch butterfly it lifts its wings and soars into the sky in search of a mate. When it finds a mate it will begin once again the life cycle of a new generation.

By Grace and Les Richards.

Supplied courteously by the Information Centre Staff

### Asclepias

“Swan-plant”, “Silk-weed”, “Swallow-wort”,  
“Milkweed”

*Asclepiadaceae*

Asclepius, god of healing, was one of the most important of the deities of ancient Greece. There are many stories told of how he came into being. They cannot all be true. The modern reader must select. Perhaps it went this way - Asclepius was certainly the son of Apollo - born perhaps to

Coronis, who afraid of being found with child, hid, and finally gave birth to this little boy in the woods near Epidaurus. It was a rough area, and the child was fed on goat's milk, and finally found by the local goatherd. It was early discovered that Asclepius had the gift of healing. Asclepius grew up and had two sons, both physicians: and four daughters, two of whom seem to be with us yet, namely *Hygieia* and *Panacea*. It was these three - Asclepius, *Hygieia* and *Panacea* - who were frequently worshipped together in various places, but especially at Epidaurus. To this place came Greek physicians, to take the Hippocratic oath. The Greeks made medicine a true science. Epidaurus however, was indeed a shrine, the gods were implored there; and those wanting to be cured invariably spent a night in the sacred precincts. Today Epidaurus is still visited—now by tourists, for here the great theatre is still in use.

There's more to record. In 293 BC a great plague broke out in Rome. It was decreed that the Romans should worship Asclepius. An island in the Tiber was chosen as his abode. There, as at Epidaurus, those wishing to be cured spent the night. The Latin form of the name is *Asculapius* and to this day the *Island of Asculapius* has a hospital upon it, a huge general hospital, which occupies almost the whole island.

There are about one hundred and eight species including annuals, perennials and shrubs, usually grown for their nectar-rich, sometimes fragrant and often brightly coloured flowers. While true homelands are the Americas and South Africa, these plants, brought to Europe, have made themselves extremely happy there.

Milk-weed is used for other plants with milky juice, but is associated chiefly with this plant, perhaps because of the little boy, Asclepius, who once drank goat's milk. Silk-weed is descriptive of some plants whose seeds have apical silky tufts to aid distribution. One such is the swan-plant. *Asclepius physocarpa*, known to many a gardener and very popular as one of the main foods of the monarch butterfly. Swallow-wort applies to one European species, which has a useful emetic root, formerly used as an antidote for poisoning.

From *Deities in my Garden*, by Fay Clayton, 1994 Ety Publications, Paraparaumu, New Zealand.

(All extracts from Fay Clayton's books used with permission)

### Mulch – The good, The bad and The dirty.

It takes just a few hot days and our attention turns to the well being of the garden and if the plants have enough water. The natural reaction is to apply copious amounts whether it is actually required or not. Sometimes this is more for our own consolation rather than to satisfy the plant's needs.

There are several strategies that can be used to prepare the garden to cope with hot, demanding conditions. The use of mulch is an important one of those strategies and it is the cornerstone of a water efficient garden. Over the past two decades it has probably been the single most important technique or product that has had an impact on Australian gardens.

The term 'mulch' can include many different materials, such as plastics, paper, wool, stone, crushed rock, screenings and wood chips. Organic mulch, which consists of shredded or fine broken down vegetative matter, will be the focus of this paper.

The claimed water savings by using mulch range up to 50% however to achieve the benefits of mulch it is important to recognise that it does have some limitations.

The benefits of mulch can be categorised as:

- a. Aesthetically enhancing qualities
- b. Improved soil characteristics
- c. Water saving properties

Organic mulch can be very attractive as a landscaping technique as it can cover up a lot and provide a textured and uniform surface which is aesthetically pleasing. Being an organic material, it will break down in time and be incorporated with the upper layer of soil. It generally improves the properties such as water holding capacity and encourages microbiological and worm activity.

Water saving is achieved in a number of ways. A

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good covering of mulch prevents weed germination and growth and so eliminates a wasteful source of water use. Mulch also minimises evaporation from the soil surface and hence reduces losses from bare soil areas.

It has a good reputation as a water saving technique and rightly so! However, if it is used in conjunction with inappropriate irrigation systems it does not provide the savings expected. In fact, it can encourage more water use rather than less. It does have some bad points.

Two properties of organic mulch adversely affect the water needs of plants. These are:

- a. High water holding capacity
- b. High impermeability to water droplets

Mulch does not readily allow water to pass through it. It acts as a barrier. Both rainfall and irrigation water can be prevented from entering the underlying soil by a layer of fine mulch. Both low precipitation rate or light rainfall and water applied as small droplets from sprinklers and sprays are trapped by the mulch. Organic mulches that consist of fine particles are very good at holding water. Tests carried out at Burnley College show that shredded pine based mulches for example, can store 20 mm depth of water in an 80 mm mulch layer. This represents 20 litres of water for each square metre of the test mulch. The water stays in the mulch and does not drain through to the soil. With some fine microsprays it can take two hours or more just to wet the mulch. Light rainfall also just wets up the mulch. The soil does not benefit as much of the water is evaporated back to the atmosphere from within the mulch and so is lost and not available to plants. The method of application of water should be carefully considered when selecting irrigation applicators or outlets for mulched areas.

Irrigation equipment can be placed either above the mulch or below it. Drip irrigation systems can be covered by the mulch and will work very efficiently. The irrigation system is out of the way and the mulch maintains moist soil conditions without water lost by evaporation from the soil surface.

If above mulch irrigation equipment is used then spray outlets with very high precipitation rates should be selected. High precipitation rate sprays (greater than 30 mm depth per hour) or bubblers which produce a localised wetting by using high flow rate and small areas of coverage are recommended. Drippers can be used above mulch layers however it is important to select drippers with flow rates greater than 4 litres per hour so that there is enough flow to encourage water to drain through the mulch.

After the next rainfall or irrigation gardeners should dig up the mulch and see how far the water has progressed through the mulch layer. Don't assume that all the water applied to the surface of the mulch is beneficial to the plants. It could be wet on top and still drought-stressed underneath.

Geoff Connellan

Property Care Industry, Vol 2 No 4. November/December 2001.

### **Delphinium**

“Larkspur”, Rocket larkspur”

*Ranunculaceae*

C. 250 species. Into the air an arrow of blue! So shoots the dolphin! So too does delphinium; and each floret has a nectary deep-set, like the eye of a dolphin. The ancient Greeks named these flowers *deplph*, from *delphis*, dolphin. The dolphin has always been loved. It provided the French centuries ago with inspiration for the family name *Dauphin* which, from 1349 – 1830, became the title of the direct heir to the throne. We've a top class name here.

What of the plant? This genus consists of annual, biennial and perennial herbs and homelands range from the Mediterranean to Siberia. Larkspur occurs because some species have most noticeable spurred petals. All larks, especially the skylark, have spurs. The original colours have been added to with red and even yellow. For my part that shoot of blue is enough!

From Handbook for the baffled gardener - What those plant names mean, by Fay Clayton, 1996 Ety Publications, Paraparaumu, New Zealand.



## Snippets

### The Propagating Teams

The four Teams of plant propagators have been busy again this year, taking cuttings or dividing roots, collecting seedlings from the Gardens and in some cases sowing seeds supplied by the Gardens' staff. The results were to be seen at the Great Plant Sale on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October and were very pleasing. We made a reasonable profit for the Friends' projects and hope to continue raising funds by sales from the Plant Sales Trolley outside the Information Centre. Check it out each time you come to the Gardens; there is always new stock coming along as the seasons change. Many of the plants and flowers you admire in the Gardens can be purchased very reasonably from our Sales Trolley.

The plants will be small, as we cannot compete with commercial growers, but you can demonstrate your gardening skills by selecting and raising the right plant for your location. We should be very glad of more help with this work if you have any spare time. At present there are 4 teams, each working on a different day we have it in mind to start another Team propagating herbs; if this interests you, please call Helen Constable, on 332-1212 or tell the staff in the Information Centre.

We use the propagating pit in the Friends' greenhouse and also boxes in the Quarantine House for our cuttings. In spite of some problems with both facilities, we get a good strike rate overall. Those of you who are interested in the details should join us; I am sure you would find it as entertaining as we do. Our perennials mostly come from plant materials not needed by the Gardens, carefully divided and grown on by Max Visch and his team. And similarly Jane McArthur and helpers raise rock plants and bulbs for people who delight in such specialties. The Trees Shrubs & Natives team have a wide variety of material, from NZ ferns to flowering shrubs and beyond, and Neil O'Brien is our natives specialist. And if succulents and cacti are your bag, offer your services to Jim Dunn. We should like to develop

a herb section though space may be a problem. We would be delighted to talk to anyone interested. Although most of the team members come in regularly each week on a given day, much of the work is seasonal so a few hours here and there may be just what is needed. For instance, during the summer help with watering is very welcome. It is always a pleasure to work with plants and to exercise the skills so many people have learned throughout their lives. And the result will be funds for the many worthwhile Friends' projects.

Helen

### Wanted

Copies of the "Weekend Gardener". Rob Lahood the publisher has given us permission to use the "Plant Gallery" photographs on our display boards at future plant sales. Please save these for the potting team. Also needed - some Friends to match pictures to plant lists.

Phone Faye 351 7798.

### Sub reminder

Thank to all who have renewed their 2002/3 subscription. Our financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June and subscriptions should be paid by 30 November each year. If you have received a renewal form with this newsletter, please renew your sub now as no further newsletters will be mailed to unfinancial members. We need and value your support even if you cannot be an active member. NB Please send to P.O. Box 2553 Christchurch

### Annual Meeting follow-up

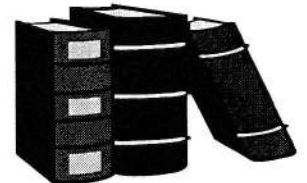
Copies of the Audited accounts are available from the new Treasurer Alison Fox - Phone 942-4989

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Books purchased for Botanic Garden's Library with Friends' annual grant 2001/2.

"Plants and People of Nepal"  
"The Gardens of Roberto Burle Marx"  
"Gardens in China"  
"Ethnobotany-Evolution of a Discipline"  
"Richard Spruce (1817-1893) Botanist and explorer"  
"Field Guide to Tropical Plants of Asia"  
"Lilacs-the Genus Syringa"  
"World Checklist and Bibliography of Conifers"  
"Alpine Plants of North America"  
"The Genus Epimedium"  
"Portraits of Himalayan Flowers"

Narayan P Manandhar  
Sima Eliovson  
Peter Valda  
Richard Evans Schultes and Siri von Reis (Eds)  
M.R.D. Seaward & S.M.D. Fitzgerald (Eds)  
David H Engel & Suchart Plummer  
Fr. John L. Fiala  
Aljos Farjon 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.  
Graham Nicholls  
William T. Stearn  
Toshio Yoshida



A Warm Welcome to the following New Members

P. Morris, S. Drury, G. Payne, C. & J. Anderton, M. Childs, C. & D. Manhire,  
B. & D. Godfrey, N. Osborne, V. Mountford, G. Parmenter, Petanque Club, R.  
Raynel, M. Morris, T. West and A. & T. Taylor.

### Attention

Is there anybody interested in forming or helping a group with a revegetation project. Plans are underway for Addington and Riccarton Creeks which flow through South Hagley Park. At the moment the project is in the initial planning stages with resource consent, funding and sowing plant material to be decided. (Addington Bush nursery can be used)



It is something different for individuals in the Friends of the Botanic Gardens to get involved in and can be very rewarding.

If interested please contact Ryan Young, C/- Botanic Gardens

### Ann Arbor, Michigan

The town of trees - thousands of them - every street is full and almost every garden has a tree, city owned and protected - parks abound plus small areas of woodlands left undisturbed in gullies with streams flowing towards the River Huron. No garden fences so a veritable botanical delight especially in Spring when everything is bursting into life after a long cold winter. An added bonus, squirrels and chipmunks which delight you as you walk and absorb nature at her best. To all this add Nichols Arboretum in the city centre - about 125 acres with the River Huron as its centre piece - its hills and valleys covered with local growing trees plus groupings from many other U.S. areas - Rhododendrons from the Appalachians, a prairie reconstruction and in full colour - a peony collection - a delight to the eye in an idyllic setting for a late evening picnic. Ann Arbor is a University City and its campus is also a botanical delight enhanced by some magnificent buildings especially the law Faculty. A joy to behold.  
Ruby Coleman

### Botanic Gardens' Bridge Update.

Botanic Gardens users will be aware of the changes taking place to the arched bridge leading into the gardens from the Armagh car park. The existing concrete structure is too narrow for the number of people who use it - more than 400,000 visitors pass over it each year, and the horizontal balustrade and steep incline do not meet current safety standards.

The old bridge was only 1.6m wide, and being a popular spot for people to take in the river view or simply observe the fish below, there was considerable congestion. The new bridge will be twice as wide with a new balustrade and rail, and the approach will have a more gentle gradient. A patterned fascia panel will screen service piping that runs under the bridge.

The existing structure has been retained and a wider concrete pad laid over the top of it. On the car park side of the bridge there will be new planter beds and trees associated with a paved entrance area to the bridge. The alternative temporary bridge just upstream from the existing one will be removed once work is completed, which should be in early December.

### Shaw Nature Reserve, St. Louis Missouri

Some 25 miles from the City is this wonderful place, purchased by the Missouri Botanical Gardens in 1925. The Gardens were certainly farsighted when they purchased this jewel in order to grow trees away from the then heavy industrial pollution. Now 1300 acres it includes a red brick house (built in 1879 by a former Confederate Colonel on his farm) now the home of a 'People on the Land' exhibition. This shows habitats and land use way back in time. Fourteen miles of trails cover wetlands, wildflower areas, prairie sites and lakes with bullfrogs and turtles swimming making this a special experience. We visited on a weekday so had the whole area to ourselves except for a few dedicated workers, everywhere were labels giving historical and botanical notes and of course trail signs to help you wander with some sense of direction.

Ruby Coleman

### Paeonia "Peony" *Paeoniaceae*

As a child I loved the peony. A huge clump grew in the front garden in a place shielded from the early morning sun, its showy flowers and great globular buds in among handsome leaves. Though these flowers are excellent for cutting we children were not permitted to pick them. We had our own plentiful pansies, violets, primroses, freesias and iceland poppies. In our childhood garden the peony was seen as something special. So too is the god after whom it is named.

In the oldest of the Greek legends Paeon is the physician of the gods. He later became identified with Apollo, and as such had a son (see Asclepias) also a physician, whose name still lives on in the great modern hospital in Italy. Pliny the Elder wrote of the paeony as the oldest of all cultivated flowers. It had been growing in China for centuries before his time. All in all, longevity seems to be an essential part of the plant: the plant itself resents root disturbance and may live for fifty years or more if undisturbed. *Paeony* was part of English long ago.

We still sing paeans or songs of joy, praise or thanksgiving. And so we should; for *Paeonia officinalis* has long been used as an antispasmodic for convulsions, chorea and epilepsy. Culpepper wrote so charmingly, "the root, freshly gathered, cures the falling sickness; take the root, washed clean and stamped small, and infuse in sack for twenty-four hours at the least, and take a good draught morning and evening for days together..."

I used to wonder why this plant did not like the early morning sun. I still wonder. Its homelands include Europe, temperate Asia and north west America, and China. Of thirty-three species all are hardy as perennial herbs or shrubby as in the tree peonies.

From Deities in my Garden, by Fay Clayton, 1994 Ety Publications, Paraparaumu, New Zealand.

See the BG Peonies on display in the Heritage Rose Garden.

## 12 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDEN

Contact Numbers			Newsletter	Peter Mahan	354-1550
President	Faye Fleming	351-7798	Afternoon Programme	Adrienne Moore	351-5915
Vice President	David Given	351-6069		Dave Moyle	358-8914
Immediate Past President	Dennis Preston	351-4131		Ingrid Platt	358-5197
Treasurer	Alison Fox	942-4989		Lynne Rowe	358-8412
Membership Secretary	Ruby Coleman	355-8811	Ex Officio	Kevin Garnett	941-7580
Minutes Secretary	Jim Crook	358-5845	Helpers		
Committee Members			Plant Sale	Helen Constable	332-1212
N. Assistant	Maria Adamski	325-2330	Newsletter mail out	Sally Jebson	352-6363
	Charlotte Bangma	337-6610	Guide Coordinator	Chris O'Sullivan	332 8565
	Janet Begg	385-5114	Botanist	Bill Sykes	366-3844
	Joan Bower	326-5312	Walks	Max Visch	338-2273
Outings/trips	Alison Fox	942-4989	Enquiries	Information Centre	364-7590

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Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc  
PO Box 2553  
Christchurch  
New Zealand

**FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS**
**Insert**

November 20th	Wednesday 7.30 pm Petanque Rooms	Talk	<i>Roses, Roses, and more Roses.</i> Members of the Friends' Guides will speak about some of their favourite roses. Please bring one of your own rose blooms, named if possible and in a vase for display. Raffle prize will be a rose plant. Tea and coffee.
November 23rd	Saturday 9 am - 5 pm. Meet by 8.45 am in BG car park by Petanque Rooms	Bus tour	Nancy Tichborne's garden and studio and Heaton Rutland's garden at Robinson's Bay. For details Ph Alison Fox on 9424 989.
November 30th	Saturday 9 am - 5 pm. Meet by 8.45 am in BG car park by Petanque Rooms	Bus Tour	Nancy Tichborne's garden and studio and Heaton Rutland's garden at Robinson's Bay. For details Ph Alison Fox on 9424 989.
December 3rd	Tuesday 9 am Information Centre	Walk	<i>Herb culture</i> with David Barwick, Staff member.
December 6th	Friday 5.30 pm - 7 pm Townend House	Christmas Party	Please bring a plate of finger food to share, plus a small wrapped potted plant from your own garden or small garden gift (e.g. packet of seeds) for plant lucky dip. Drinks at own cost.
December 21st	Saturday 1.30 pm Information Centre	Walk cost \$2	<i>China's contribution to our Garden Flora</i> with Max Visch and Friends' Guides.
January 18th	Saturday 1.30 pm Information Centre	Walk cost \$2	<i>Getting to know the Conifers</i> with Max Visch.
February 13th	Thursday 7 pm Information Centre	Walk cost \$2	<i>Introduction to the Botanic Gardens and Summer Highlights</i> with members of the Friends' Guiding Group. A Festival of Flowers event.
February 14th - 23rd	Friday to Saturday		Garden City Festival of Flowers. Full details of events available early 2003 from Garden City Trust. <a href="http://www.festivalofflowers.co.nz">www.festivalofflowers.co.nz</a> .
February 15th	Saturday 1.30 pm Information Centre	Walk cost \$2	<i>The origin of our perennials</i> with Max Visch and Friends' Guides.
February 18th	Tuesday 7 pm Information Centre	Walk cost \$2	<i>Introduction to the Botanic Gardens and Summer Highlights</i> with members of the Friends' Guiding Group. A Festival of Flowers event.
February 20th	Thursday 7 pm Information Centre	Walk cost \$2	<i>Introduction to the Botanic Gardens and Summer Highlights</i> with members of the Friends' Guiding Group. A Festival of Flowers event.
February 23rd	Sunday 10.30 am - 4 pm Botanic Gardens	Big Day in the Park	Entertainment and stalls in the Botanic Gardens including Friends' plant stall. Helpers please contact Helen Constable 3321 212.
February 25th	Tuesday 10.15 am By Gardens' Library	Walk	<i>Begonias</i> with Greg Salton, Conservatories Co-ordinator

## FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

March 3rd	Monday 2 pm Information Centre	Walk cost \$2	<i>The medicinal use of plants</i> with Rob Martin, Medical Herbalist. Followed by afternoon tea.
March 25th	Tuesday 10.15 am Gardens' Library	Walk	<i>Dahlia Delight</i> with Bede Nottingham, Grounds Co-ordinator
March 16th	Saturday 2 pm	Garden visit	<i>Tips and tricks of a Designer's Garden.</i> A visit to John Morton's garden. RSVP to Alison Fox by 2 March for details and cost.

### Changes

### Monday 17 February 2003 8 pm Our City O-Tautahi

Please note in 2003 the Tuesday walks with the Botanic Gardens staff will include the following changes:

- They will be on every 4th Tuesday of the month instead of 2nd Tuesday.
- They will start from the Botanic Gardens Library instead of outside the Information Centre.
- You are invited to morning tea with the Staff in the Staff tea room at 10 am prior to the walk.
- Non members are welcome to join the walk



Illustrated slide talk on Plant Art by Elisabeth Sherras Clark, visiting English Botanical Illustrator. Cost \$15, includes supper. Phone Joan Bower 326 5312 for bookings.

This Friends' function is open to all as part of the Festival of Flowers. Please encourage friends to come. Cnr Worcester Boulevard and Oxford Terrace.

### Childrens' Fun Day

Saturday 12 April 2003. Bring your family picnic lunch into the Gardens. Fun activities for children 12 years and below. Bring your children, grandchildren and little visitors. Activities include the great self-guided detective hunt with your buddy, a choice of afternoon workshops e.g. build and test your bush shelter's waterproof roof, build a model bridge or bird feeding tower, who can make the smelliest herbal mix? Other choices could include art, drama or colonial games. Phone Lynne Rowe on 358 8412 with possible children numbers to help with planning. Precise details available later.

Christchurch Tramway Ltd are no longer operating the Toast Rack tours in the Gardens.

### Coming Events

An exhibition of Botanical works by local artists Jo Ewing and Dianne Smith, both members of the Friends, will be on display during the festival at the Heritage Hotel Cathedral Square. A workshop for artists will be held in conjunction with the visit of Elisabeth Sherras Clark. Enquires to Dianne Smith phone 03 327 5223

### Information Centre Displays

A reminder, wheel chairs are available at the Information Centre, free of charge for use within the Botanic Gardens. Enquiries to Information Centre phone 364 7590

February	Festival of Flowers (The Flower Fairy's Night time Visit to Toadstool Town)
3 to 16 March	Halswell Pottery
19 March to 13 April	World Meteorological Day 23 March
Late April	Autumn Display