

Newsletter

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

No 60, Spring 2004

President's Report

As the new President of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens the circle which was commenced 45 years ago as a trainee is completed. In those days at the end of the week, although physically drained one had a feeling of pride at the vista of manicured lawns and carefully tended beds.

Unfortunately successive administrations did not see fit to fund the Gardens to this standard. Instead it was allowed to deteriorate to a stage where one could not differentiate between the Gardens and a public park. Fortunately the slide has been arrested and slow but steady progress has been made to raise the standard.

The position that Christchurch finds itself in is not without precedent because the Dunedin Botanic Gardens were at the same stage 20 years ago. Remembering what these Gardens were like when I worked there 30 years ago to what they are today, is hard to believe. This turn around has been possible through dedicated staff and sufficient funding. To gain a true comparison of the two gardens, read Eric Dunlop's book "The Story of the Dunedin Botanic Gardens". It is interesting to see that the Dunedin Gardens have gone back to embrace the principles set down by Cockayne.

I am confident that the Christchurch Botanic Gardens will in time regain their former status. We are fortunate to have the services of Dr David Given who has the knowledge, vision and passion and is leading a team of talented Curators. I believe it is the role of the Friends to ensure that the 12 elected representatives become committed to ensuring that the Gardens are funded on the same basis as the Art Gallery and Canterbury Museum and that the Gardens will be the jewel in the Crown for the next 140 years.

David Moyle.

Book Now for our two exciting Bus trips.

Sat 9 October Day trip to Ashburton area visiting Alouette Gardens, Balvenie Farm Garden and Suzette Gardens Rakaia, to enjoy the highlights of Spring. Please meet at 8.45 am outside the Petanque Club rooms in the BG Armagh St Carpark. Bus returns at 5.00pm. Cost: members \$26, non-members \$28. Please bring own lunch and mug. Tea and coffee will be provided at lunchtime only. Please book **early** using the form enclosed.

Sat 20 November Day trip to Akaroa. We will stop at the Little River Gallery for a short visit, then on to the Akaroa Museum for the Historical exhibition, "Tane's Domain", and a talk by Dr Warwick Harris on Raoul and Belligny, early French Botanists in the area in 1840-43. Some may wish to then take advantage of the numerous Cafes and Eateries in Akaroa, the others of us will picnic near the Wharf. We will then go to the Garden of Tane where Warwick will give a talk about the garden. Those who cannot manage the downhill aspects of the Gardens will be taken down in the bus. Please meet at 8.45am outside the Petanque Club rooms in the BG Armagh St Carpark. Bus returns at 5.00pm. The charge for this trip will be \$24 for members and \$26 for non-members. Please bring own lunch and Tea/ coffee etc. if you intend to picnic. To book, please mail using form enclosed. In order to keep the cost as low as possible we will need a full bus so **please book early** as I must finalise at least 3 weeks ahead.

Alison Fox

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FCBG
PO Box 2553
Christchurch

Gardens' News

From the Curator.

The Botanic Gardens is almost shaking off the shackles of winter and within the next few weeks will be blazing into the glories of spring. This emphasises for all of us the seasonal nature of the Botanic Gardens and the change that this brings throughout the year. We have already seen early flowering of some normally late winter and spring shrubs and trees.

The big issue at present is the first part of the public consultation on Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens. We are looking forward to extensive comment from the community on this, and to using this to guide thinking for the coming years on how the Botanic Gardens should develop, emphasis for its various activities and how it can best serve the public and other users. A major issue is the position and function of a new building for the Botanic Gardens that will serve both public and staff needs. This includes education and research roles, new display areas, retailing and food outlets, and an expansion of currently cramped space for staff. It is proposed to include space for the Friends.

We are also in the focus group stage of visitor surveys that have been carried out by Opinions Ltd. These are providing valuable information on how people and groups use the Gardens and how those needs can best be met. Xiaomeng (Sharon) Sun, a postgraduate student at Lincoln University is undertaking a study of the relationship between Chinese people and the Botanic Gardens and this will provide valuable sector information on a rapidly growing part of the local community.

There have been several smaller projects finished recently, with the planting around the Riccarton Avenue entrance being enhanced. The entrance with its recently painted gates and now with under planting and new paths, should add to the interest this spring.

Orchids on display are a feature in the Gilpin House, complemented with the wonderful array of bromeliads. Although the space does not allow for the complete collection to be on show, the collection is rotated according to season and flowering interest. So far the public response has been very positive and we have received many commendations about this new display and

complimentary Information Centre presentation.

Work has also been underway to link the very successful Friends' children's trails with other activities in the Gardens' calendar. Friends' member Lynne Rowe and Gardens' staff have been working on 4 new and exciting trails to support other activities. The first trail of this series is out now and the next will link to heritage week (Oct 15th start). Other activities over that week include personal appearances from key historical figures linked to the Gardens and two heritage focused walks. Details BG Info Centre 941 6840 xtn 7590.

On a final note and with another date for the diary, other members of the Gardens' team have been working hard on an external display for show in **TV NZ Alpine Garden Society – Spring Show**. The team from here will be presenting a native selection of alpiners and are focusing on the ways in which alpiners have adapted and their family groups. For those who wish to see more, the show is on the **18 & 19 September at the University of Canterbury's, Student Union, ballroom**.

David Given.

NB Don't miss the alpine plant walk in the Gardens with Malcolm Shirlaw on Tue 28 Sep at 10.15am from the Information Centre.

Botanic Gardens' Grounds' Volunteers

Eighteen months ago we started organising a Volunteer programme using members of the Friends of the Gardens to assist the grounds' staff within the Botanic Gardens. This has proven to be of invaluable assistance to the grounds' staff, with a total of 1290 hours having been worked over the last 18 months. This works out to be an average of 16 hrs per week.

I would like to thank the 10 volunteers who have been involved in a number of projects over this time. These projects have ranged from painting and assembling over 250 label stands (Charlotte and Phillip); cleaning and staining seats (Phillip); deadheading Dahlia cultivars over the summer (Lynne); recording locations and condition of Assets within the Botanic Gardens and Mona Vale (Ian); and finally but not least - deadheading, pruning and weeding in the Central Rose Garden and the Heritage Rose Garden, a big thank you to

Jane, Pam and Doug with assistance from Annette and Natalie.

We are very keen to continue having Friends' Volunteers helping with projects for the grounds' staff. I know from Volunteer feedback, that the rewards from the interaction with and appreciation of staff and visitors to the Gardens, makes volunteering both enjoyable and rewarding. So if you think you would like to be involved in the Volunteer programme no matter how small you think your contribution maybe, contact either Faye Fleming ph 3517798 or me.

Bede Nottingham, Grounds' Co-ordinator,
ph 941 7587 or Cell: 027 210 2365.

Out in the Grounds - Spring Feature Plants in the Botanic Gardens' Rockery

Salix - Salicaceae Willow

This genus includes about 300 species of deciduous trees, shrubs and ground covers. Many originated in China and some cuttings were apparently brought from China in the saddlebags of the traders along the Silk Road. They are found mainly in the northern hemisphere generally growing near water and having slender flexible branches, narrow leaves and spikes or catkins of male and female flowers usually borne on separate trees. The catkins often appear before leaves. The small flowers are insect pollinated. The hardy, fast-growing but relatively short-lived willows are often grown for their timber for furniture and cricket bats. Their twigs are used in basket making and for high-quality drawing charcoal. Willow bark from Brazil was the original

source of aspirin (hence salicylic acid - the main ingredient). A willowy person, normally a woman, is tall and slender. The blue on white willow pattern on Chinese ceramics shows a landscape with a willow tree, bridge and figures. A sally stick (willow) is an Irish term and to "sally up" something was to "encourage" it with a willow branch! Weeping willows are important guardians of the River Avon and children like the early spring appearance of the "pussy" willow buds.

Rock Garden varieties include;

Salix apoda, Turkey

This species grows to about one metre and spreads to 2.5m wide. The pointed, oval leaves are 6 cm long covered with hair when young, and dark green when mature. In early spring, reddish brown buds open to reveal striking grey catkins with a felt-like texture. This species is like bonsai, a quality marvellous for a large rock garden.

Salix repens 'Iona' Garden Origin Creeping Willow.

This grows to 1.5m across and is 20cm to 1.5 m high. Its downy shoots become smooth as they mature. They have small tapering leaves and are green above and silvery below. It has small catkins in spring.

Salix repens Arctic creeping Willow, European Russia and Northern Asia. This grows to 45-90 cm across and is only 5 cm high. It has reddish brown branches and the leaves are green wrinkled above and paler bluish beneath. There are dense long hairs on both surfaces. Erect catkins are longhaired and have black-tipped scales.

Faye Fleming

Botanic Gardens' Library. Thank you Friends

On behalf of the Botanic Gardens' staff, I would like to again extend warmest thanks to the Friends for your annual grant of \$1250 to the Gardens' library. This has enabled us to add the following accessions to our collection for 2003/04.

Purchased from Touchwood Books in Hastings:

"The Genus *Arisaema*", A Monograph For Botanists And Nature Lovers by Guy & Liliane Gusman;

"Clivias" by Harold Koopowitz.

From Technical Books in Riccarton:

"The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species" by Peter A. Cox & Kenneth N.E. Cox.

From Whitcoulls:

"Flora" The Gardener's Bible, with Chief Consultant Rachel Vogan. (Two volumes).

From Koeltz Scientific Books in Germany :

"Hortica - Color Cyclopedia of Garden Flora and Indoor Plants" by Alfred Byrd Graf.

Thank you.

Sue Molloy, Botanical Resources' Co-ordinator.

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Pulsatilla

The name is of unknown origin having been first used by Pierandrea Mattioli, (1500-1577) Italian physician and botanist. The species was classified as an Anemone but is now given generic rank though listed and also known as Anemone. Pulsatillas can be distinguished mainly by their styles lengthening up to five centimetres after flowering. They also have distinctive feathery foliage. More than a dozen species belong to the genus the best known being *P. vulgaris* the Pasque flower, one of the first perennials to bloom in the spring. Seed heads are attractive balls of silken hairs that remain on the plant for a long period. The Pasque flower requires sunny well-drained conditions and generally does best on chalky soils.

P. alpina is best grown from seed and never moved as the rootstock is woody and grows deep. *P. sulphurea* is a deep yellow and grows on granitic rocks; a white form prefers limestone. *P. vernalis* the Spring Anemone is the earliest of the alpine group to open in the Alps and requires very well drained conditions in rock gardens.

The Pasque flower is the State flower of South Dakota. It is also known as the May Day Flower, blooming as the first sign of spring and called pasque as it blooms at Easter. Pasque = passing. The Pasque flower is useful in treating eye and other diseases. According to Greek legend it sprang from the tears of Venus and Dioscorides recommended its use for ophthalmia, as did Gerard and Culpepper. In homoeopathy one of the chief symptoms associated with this herb is tearfulness and it is used to treat catarrh, indigestion, measles and for conditions characterized by weepiness and indecision. *Pulsatilla pratensis* is also used medicinally.
Sandy Bain

Androsace: (from greek – *aner*, a man, and *sakos*, buckler, from the resemblance of the anther to an ancient buckler (a hand shield) and pronounced an-dro-sa-se or an-dro-sa-se. They belong to the Primula family, Primulaceae and for those who are keen amateur botanists, they differ botanically by having the corolla tube shorter than the calyx and constricted at the throat and closed by a ring of scales. There are 100 species, of annual, biennial or perennial, often tufted evergreen herbs containing many attractive species and cultivars, many of them are European in origin.

Tannock, in his book 'Rock Gardening in NZ,' printed during the early 1900's, describes Androsace as; "these little beauties ... amongst the first and most precious of all alpiners. They are typical of their class and have all the winning grace and charm of the best mountain plants."

Androsace lanuginosa from the Himalayas is one of the most popular species. The foliage, spreading and beautiful when drooping over rocks or carpeting a steep pocket, is covered with silvery hairs. The flowers, which are verbena-like, are borne in umbels, and are rose coloured with a yellow eye.

A. folius is another beautiful and vigorous species with rose-coloured flowers.

Cultivation: Known as the Rock Jasmine, the species usually favored will grow well, provided they are given a deep root run in rich gritty soil in a position where water cannot lie on the surface and cause decay during the winter.

Propagation: As nearly the entire genus throws runners (a little like strawberries), these form a suitable method of propagation although many can be raised from seed and with a few species take about two years to germinate. Propagation by means of runners is best carried out during late summer when they can be detached once they have rooted and inserted in a bed of sand or pots.
Don Bell

Crocus

There are about 90 species of crocus with innumerable varieties, which flower from autumn through to spring. They are native to the Mediterranean but most crocus sold today are Dutch hybrids. The true autumn crocus is easy to differentiate from Colchicum. A crocus has three stamens and narrow leaves usually with a white stripe. Colchicums have six stamens, produce flowers before leaves which are wider and coarser. The crocus belongs to the Iris family and Colchicums to the Lily family. Colchicum is poisonous.

Crocus need hot dry summers and plenty of moisture in winter with good drainage so they are ideal for rock gardens. Colours range from amethyst, mauve, pink, rose, violet, purple and white. Flowers usually appear before the leaves. *Crocus speciosus* is the largest and most popular of the autumn crocuses with a colour range from pure white to violet and amethyst-pink.

Crocus sativus is the crocus from which saffron is collected. Over 4000 flowers are needed to yield a single ounce of saffron, which is produced from the red stigma.

Before nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves became popular, saffron was used in medicine, cosmetics, as a disinfectant, and for colouring and flavouring. Saffron cakes are still eaten in parts of England. A pilgrim is said to have carried a saffron crocus in his staff in the 16th Century from Asia Minor to England. These corms founded an industry in Walden, Essex and the town is now called Saffron Walden though curiously enough flowers are seldom found in Britain now.

Italian ladies in the past were so taken with the blonde locks of the ladies in the north that they used saffron to dye their hair. Dyeing linen sheets with saffron was forbidden in the reign of Henry VIII because the sheets were not being laundered enough.

There are crocus under *Pinus pinaster* near the Cherry Mound and also in the alpine house.
Barbara Brailsford.

Rhododendrons in the Rock Garden

Dwarf species are suitable for the rockery. Rhododendrons are surface rooting, need good drainage and will tolerate a fair bit of sun but not scorching sun all day. Dwarf species will remain more compact and flower more freely in a fairly open situation. They must never be allowed to dry out. Flowers have a wide range of colours usually with five petals but occasionally 6 to 10.

Rhododendron pemakoense – from Tibet. Unique in that it suckers. Flowers in early October when it is sometimes caught by frost. Purplish pink.

R. impeditum – from China. Dense twiggy. Mauve/purplish blue. Nearest to a true blue of any genus.

R. calostratum – from Myanmar (Burma). Rose shades.

Jen Fisher.

Recent Events

We have been delighted with the response to our Winter Sunday afternoon meetings. Members and visitors came in great numbers to hear Dr Murray Parsons speak on Traditional uses of New Zealand Plants and Dr Philip Simpson passed on his huge knowledge and understanding of the Cabbage Tree. He described the cabbage tree's place in the plant world, their growth habit, ecology, importance to Maori, and use in the landscape, art and design and quoted stories from his comprehensive and lavishly illustrated book 'Dancing Leaves' the story of New Zealand's Cabbage tree. We look forward to another visit from Philip when his new book is published.

The Arbor day "Soup..plus..." lunch was a chance to enjoy great food and company with members and staff, followed by a brisk walk through the Gardens to the Pine Mound at the Eastern end of the Archery Lawn. The tree planting ceremony was organised by Brian Appleton and David Barwick, with David Haythornthwaite and pupils from Avondale Primary School. It will be a day to remember for Maree, Jordan, Kurt, Jacob, Chas, Brandon, Amy and Lara and we hope they will return often throughout their lives to watch the progress of their trees. (*Podocarpus latifolius*, from South Africa, (Planted to enhance the geographic collection).

The Tuesday Monthly walks led by staff members continue to give valuable background about the Gardens especially for our Guides. New material donated to the Library about early Botanists including Dr Leonard Cockayne, has been shared with Friends by Mark, Jo and Sue. Our thanks to all staff members who prepare so thoroughly for the Friends' walks/talks and to Max, for four recent well researched Saturday walks.

Alice Miller –Now a Doctoral student at Lincoln University spoke to the Friends in June, on "Conserving two threatened New Zealand cresses", which she studied for her Masters degree.

Alice writes "Nearly one quarter of New Zealand's unique native flora is threatened, and invasion by exotic plants and animals is the most significant current threat that our flora faces. My M.Sc. research used an experimental approach to evaluate the hypothesis that weed invasion is responsible for the restriction and decline of two of New Zealand's threatened herb species, *Pachycladon exilis* and *P. cheesemanii*. *P. exilis* is listed as Critically Endangered, and exists in only one small population in the Waitaki Valley. *P. cheesemanii* is listed as Gradual Decline; it has declined throughout its range (Marlborough to Southland), and most populations are very small (less than 100 individuals).

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The current distribution of both species is confined to rock outcrop habitat. Seed sowing and weed removal experiments in the field showed that weed competition negatively impacts on seed germination, seedling survival and growth rates for both threatened *Pachycladon* species, and thus the management of weeds within the rock outcrop habitat of these two species is essential for their ongoing survival. These experiments also demonstrated that it is relatively easy to establish new populations of these plants by sowing seed into suitable habitat. Establishing additional populations is a necessary component of the conservation management of *P. exilis*, and a possible future requirement for *P. cheesemanii*."

Alice Miller

'Growing children's interest in the Botanic Gardens' KidsFest

About 800 'super detectives' plus their adults had fun in KidsFest tracking down 'Who is the dark Destroyer' in the Botanic Gardens. (KidsFest is the citywide holiday programme sponsored by the City Council).

A number of families are now enjoying a free visit to Orana Park or Southern Encounter and Kiwi House from the Hunt's lucky dip, using tickets generously donated by Orana Wildlife Trust and Friends of Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

These children's programmes are the work of Lynne Rowe, Friends' committee member in conjunction with the Botanic Gardens' staff. We are most grateful for their work to provide such exciting opportunities to introduce young people and their families to the Gardens and to Orana Park for donating prizes.

Please bring or encourage your young friends and family to track down the "Weird and Wacky" on the new **Free Family Self Guided Detective Trail** in Christchurch Botanic Gardens from Saturday 28 August. This winter trail is the first of four seasonal trails partly funded by the Christchurch City Council Development Grant Scheme 2004.

Adults with children 6 to 10 years can collect the free detective trail sheet from The Information Centre in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, open daily 10.15am to 4pm. Trail time one hour. Bring a pen, and have lots of fun on the "Weird Wacky Trail."

Report on Friends' Annual General Meeting

Sixty-seven members of the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens attended the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting of the Society held in the Canterbury Horticultural Centre on Sunday 8 August.

For the information of those members who were unable to attend the meeting, Faye Fleming, Retiring President, supplemented her Annual Report mailed to members with the following comments:

- In carrying out its objectives, and in its relations with other organisations, the Society had been, and needed to continue being, completely independent to promote the best interests of the Botanic Gardens and its staff.
- Because of the very close proximity of the Museum to the Gardens the Friends must seek a healthy working relationship and be prepared to discuss contentious issues with Museum management.
- Botanic Gardens' staff had been extremely helpful with all Friends' activities in the Gardens. D. Given and J. Hawker had been especially supportive.
- The appointment of Jo Rooke as Information and Promotions' Co-ordinator was a welcome step in the public development of the Gardens. It was hoped that with her assistance a web site link for the Friends could be established.
- The Friends' programme was aimed at providing a diverse range of activities - social, educational, tours, walks, meetings etc. in an endeavour to meet members' interests. The Society was very grateful to all those people who developed and managed the programme. Ideas on new activities were always most welcome.
- The Friends' Guide Training Programme had been an exciting development and Friends' guides were now offering daily tours of the Gardens except during the colder months.
- The Friends were indebted to the Potting Group for its continuing significant contributions to the Society funds. The Potting area had been upgraded during the year.
- A number of the Friends had been working alongside staff in the Gardens helping share their routine duties. That assistance had been appreciated.

- Children's holiday programmes were proving very popular in the Gardens. KidsFest in which the Friends helped had seen 800 people participating. With the assistance of a Council grant the Friends would be conducting four Children's Detective Hunts with a Gardens' emphasis during the current year.
- The Committee was conscious that the Society was holding substantial funds at the present time. Those funds had been accumulated pending completion of a Consultants' report commissioned by the Council to establish a strategy for the Gardens that would enable expenditure priorities to be assessed. A lengthy list of recommendations for expenditure of Friends' funds was expected, including a possible summer scholarship grant for soil testing in the Gardens.
- J. Begg and M. Morris (who had been appointed to fill a casual vacancy on the Committee during the year) were retiring from the Committee as from the Annual General Meeting.
- The Society was in great heart. It had a strong financial position, many membership activities and a good relationship with Gardens' staff. Exciting times were ahead.
- On her retirement from the position of President of the Friends F. Fleming extended her grateful appreciation to the Committee and to all who had helped her during the time that she held that office.

David Moyle was elected President to replace Faye Fleming. His appointment, the election of Don Bell and Elizabeth Wolff as new members of the Committee, and the re-election of other Committee members were all warmly welcomed.

On completion of formal business a tribute was paid to Faye Fleming for the extensive and most productive work she had performed while President of the Society. She was presented with a floral bouquet as a token of appreciation for that work. Flowers were also presented to Janet Begg and to Alison Fox in recognition of their services.

In his own inimitable way Dr David Given then drew on his knowledge of overseas Botanic Gardens and extensive photographic library to present some ideas on ways the Christchurch Botanic Gardens might be developed.

Friends' Guiding Group

The new season for the Daily Guided Walks started on Wednesday 1st September and finishes on 30th April 2005. New posters advertising our walks are on all the Gardens' notice boards and a larger sign will be outside the Rolleston Ave entrance.

After last year's successful trial (guiding over 700 visitors) it has been decided that all walks will leave from the Botanic Gardens' entrance near the Museum (Rolleston Ave). The walks are from 1.30 p.m until 3 p.m. The cost remains the same at \$5.00 per person and accompanied children under 15 are free. For local groups there is a special rate so encourage your organisations to visit the Gardens with a Guide. For Group bookings please phone 384-3475.

During Heritage Week (15-22 October) we are offering a guided walk at Mona Vale starting at 11 a.m. from the Mona Vale Gatehouse on Fendalton Rd. Cost \$2

Throughout the off-season the guides have had monthly meetings to keep their skills intact and to add to their knowledge. In August they had a finger-food luncheon to celebrate their first birthday and thanks to Adrienne Moore we had a delicious "birthday" cake.

Early next year we will run another training course to add to our numbers.

Anyone interested in training as a Friends' Guide please phone 351-7798.

It is exciting seeing all the seasonal changes in the Gardens and each walk varies so much depending on the interests of the participants.

Faye Fleming.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- The scent of violets will have the effect of paralysing the olfactory nerve after a few moments.
- Maggie Mott was one of the daughters of Mr Albert Mott and his wife Emma from Scotswood in Sunningdale Berkshire. Their gardener Mr F Burdett recognised a bluey-mauve viola as special and he exhibited the plant, which he named for his employer's daughter, at the Royal Horticultural Society Show in June 1902. This vigorous viola eventually became a well known favourite.

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News from the Plant Propagation teams

As I write, snow, sleet and cold rain alternate past my window; it is a brave cutting that will strike roots right now. And yet in the Tunnel House the cuttings hold their own and the small plants make some headway, while in the humid warmth of the Quarantine House there is more positive growth. An accident to the mister saw most of the boxes flooded for an unknown period recently, but it does not appear to have done any lasting damage and Greg had the mister operating again the following week.

Outside, the bulbs grow unfazed and we shall have an interesting collection of early spring delights, Narcissi, Babiana, Ornithogalum, Tulipa and others to sell at the Bulb Sale 11th September 2004. We shall also have a very few miniature conifers for the rock garden on sale at the same time.

The Perennials have yet to make growth although a few like Rosmarinus are flowering bravely and by the Labour Weekend Sale, October 23rd, most Perennials will be well away. Meantime, most New Zealand native shrubs and small trees are looking good and some hebes are flowering. Some of the frost tender small trees make delightful patio plants; karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*) does well in containers and can be pruned to shape. Rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*) is frost tender when young and eventually will grow to a tall tree, but suitably contained and sheltered is a charming patio shrub. Both these trees are hardy to wind and drought, as are all the Brachyglottis species which also produce lots of yellow daisy-like flowers to brighten your day. Consider natives when you have difficult spots in your garden! We have also taken cuttings of many conifers in the Pinetum and while most are still small, they promise well. Watch for these

coming on sale in the future.

And when you do not want to go outside at all, you need not be starved of plant company. Succulents such as Aloes, Echeverias, Haworthias, Rhipsalis (Hatiora) and some Bromelias can be indoor cuties or outdoor bold statements. We are selling small examples on the Sale Trolley outside the Information Centre. There will be more to come.

The Friends who join the Plant Propagation Teams enjoy working with plants and learning about the infinite variety of the green world. We enjoy too the social contacts of work days and are always happy to welcome new members. Our next Sale Day is the Bulb Sale, 11 September and then the Big Plant Sale on 23rd October. If you would like to help on sale days or on the regular work days, phone Helen at 980-9358 or e-mail: hrcon@paradise.net.nz or leave a message on Phone 941 6840 xtn 7590. Helen Constable, Plant Propagators' Coordinator

Associated group - The Canterbury Botanical Art Society

The Society now meets in the Arts Centre on the first Tuesday of each month from 9.00am to 1.00pm. The decision to have tutors for varied topics from 9.00am to 10.30am at each meeting has proved to be stimulating and interesting.

After the recent workshop on Hellebores led by Dianne Smith, five keen members took home a beautifully painted hellebore with colours ranging from luxurious magenta and pastel pink to pristine white.

Don't miss the travelling exhibition in September, by Nancy Adams, mid 20th Century botanical artist of native flora fame. This will be held at Canterbury Museum 18 September -7 November. Enquiries Contact Dianne Smith 03 3120318

Articles

The Garden of Tane, Akaroa.

This 4.9 ha area within the town boundary, easily reached for public recreation, is one of over 220 reserves maintained by the Banks Peninsula District Council. The Council contracts out most work on its reserves, walkways and tracks. It also provides for eradication of noxious weeds and

pests from reserves and assists community groups and Reserve Management Committees, providing funding where appropriate. The state of the Garden of Tane needs to be considered in these terms.

Formerly The Akaroa Domain, the area was classified for scenic purposes and named "Garden

of Tane" in 1986 pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977. Department of Lands and Survey files on the area are held in archive but it appears that the Department of Conservation has not kept a file on the reserve since its inception in April 1987. It is not known if there are Banks Peninsula District Council files on its management.

Preliminary historical research indicates it was established as The Akaroa Domain in the period of provincial government with a Domain Board appointed to oversee it. Development was well underway in 1876 when the provinces were abolished and the Akaroa Borough Council established. Then the Akaroa Domain Board resigned their trust in favour of the Borough Council.

Information in the Akaroa Mail from its first issue in 1876 to 1905, reveals recurrent issues of public garden/reserve management that remain topical today. It shows that care of the reserve waxed and waned as individuals dedicated to it came and went. These records are also important in estimating the age of significant exotic trees in the reserve and provide a time scale for tracking regeneration of native vegetation on areas that were laid out in lawns and gardens.

On 4 August 1876 The Mail reported that "The Akaroa Domain, which was a wilderness a few months ago has undergone a transition to render the grounds a most attractive resort in fine weather." Under supervision of Mr Roberts walks had been formed, seats erected, and the layout was such that "The scenery observed from several viewpoints within the grounds is grand". The Domain Board meeting in August 1876 records that trees and shrubs "were judiciously planted out under the able supervision of the Rev Mr Aylmer, whose good taste and experience in these matters has proved most acceptable".

In the same month there are references to the erection of a turnstile, lattice bridge, rustic summerhouse, tool house, dams, and planting of shrubs and flowers. In July 1878 there were plans for a water-well to fill a tank supplying a fountain and drinking facilities, a 3-m wide path from the main entrance to be shingled its entire length, and a croquet lawn. By this time over 60 varieties of conifer had been planted along with oaks, elms, beeches, sycamores, ash and others.

These developments prompted prose in The Mail

worthy of a tourist brochure – "At comparatively small expense they have converted what was once a wilderness, into a place suitable for recreation and health seeking" and, "Akaroa is gradually becoming known as a watering place and sanatorium; its Italian-like climate, romantic scenery and fine harbour are attracting visitors not only from Christchurch and other parts of Canterbury, but also from the other provinces". The developed Domain was seen as "a powerful inducement to visitors and invalids to prolong their stay...".

After not being of much interest to The Mail for 18 years, The Domain reappeared as a hot topic in a strongly worded editorial on 28 July 1896 – "What other spirit of evil influence could ever have suggested to the Akaroa Domain Board the recent destruction of the native trees in the Domain, which they were practically sworn to cherish, honour and cultivate..." and, "is its state of native loveliness, in its manukas and its shining matipos and the rest of its greenery that goes to make the flora of New Zealand one of the most beautiful in the world". Greenies were at large then!

This outcry arose from a new attempt "to give the place a park-like look" initiated by the Mayor who had a personal interest in the Domain. His Worship, Mr McGregor, lived next to the Domain, and when elected Chairman of the Domain Board it was recorded "there was hardly a day of the year on which he was not through some part of the Domain". Thus there was a further spate of exotic tree planting in 1898 including spruces, araucaria, cedars, cupressi, picea, pines and various deciduous trees supplied by Nairn & Sons, Christchurch, and supervised by the caretaker Mr Jolly.

Vandalism was a problem in Mr McGregor's garden. In May 1899 there was public notice of a £1 reward for information that would lead to the conviction of the boy or boys who had cut and destroyed trees in the Domain. The reward was not claimed.

Late in 1898 Cr Grange was concerned that English trees were displacing the bush and advocated planting native trees. The Mayor assured Grange that every care was being taken to preserve native bush. Nevertheless, in 1899 a hedge of 1000 macrocarpa was planted around The Domain and in 1900 manuka trees were cut for firewood. Mr Brittin replaced Jolly in 1903 and lived in the summerhouse. The Board consequently

arranged installment of a chimney and windows to make it livable in winter. Also the historic blockhouse was re-erected in the Domain.

By 1904 the macrocarpa hedge was too much for the caretaker to manage so the greater part was removed, but part remains as large trees today. Gorse clearing and tree thinning were also too much for the caretaker and extra labour was employed to do this. The thinning of trees for firewood was a hot issue, and Mr Henning, Chairman of the Domain Management Committee, accused the Board Chairman of unilaterally deciding which trees should be removed.

Little sign remains of the early constructions in the reserve. Nature is reclaiming it as bush. An article by Nigel Harrison in *The Akaroa Mail* 19 September 2003 relates to its recent history through a family involvement. Forty years ago his father was employed by the Council to look after The Domain and he engaged in a battle with Arthur Ericson as to how it should be managed. Ericson won, and his voluntary efforts dominated the management of what became the Garden of Tane until he died in 1991. Since then it seems to have become neglected.

The issue now is whether the Garden of Tane is in its present state bringing biodiversity back into an urban environment in an appropriate way.

Snippets

Apology.

Gremlins got into our Newsletter no 59 Winter 2004. There were some sentences at the bottom of pages in our last newsletter chopped off midway and some odd spacing. Our apologies and herewith the full paragraph after Jen Fisher's story on Archibald Menzies.

Note: To see a superb young specimen of a Monkey Puzzle, visit the Pinetum in the Botanic Gardens, (alongside the Avon River and Tennis Court Carpark, off Riccarton Avenue). This tree clearly shows why the tree would be a puzzle for monkeys to climb. (Botanists did train monkeys to collect fruit etc. from trees). There is a beautifully shaped teenage Monkey puzzle tree in the University grounds beside Clyde Road.

It's a small world after all. After reading Jen Fisher's article on Archibald Menzies, Friends' members Jim and Betty Chapman, wrote a delightful letter... "We always appreciate these newsletters, full of interesting matters. We are reminded on reading the account of Archibald Menzies and all his contributions to botanical matters, that in our former home in Scotland we looked directly across the (Tay) Valley to Wee, Archibald's home as a boy. Very appropriately there stands there close by Castle Menzies, a splendid specimen of *Arbutus menziesii*. In fact to ensure its presence there was recorded, I collected Herbarium material which is deposited at Edinburgh, Oxford (FHO) and Perth museum. I've read other accounts but until I read the newsletter,

I hadn't realised what great trials he had with Captain Vancouver."

Some of Jen's information for her article in issue 59, came from the book "Mr Menzies' Garden Legacy" by Clive L Justice, published by Cavendish Books Vancouver in 2000. This is one of the recommended books for our Guides and when discussing this book at a guiding group meeting, Diana Madgin, was heard to exclaim, "I can't believe it! I know that man (Clive Justice) and had dinner with him recently in Vancouver."

Another Menzies moment... some while ago, a member of an Elder hostel group visiting the Gardens, spoke up when the guide was talking about Menzies and his plants. This visitor was himself called Menzies. He was duly given references, follow up to see if he could be connected to Dr Archibald Menzies.

News from other Botanic Gardens

Many thanks to travelling Friends, who bring back brochures and information on other gardens. We receive newsletters from other Friends' groups in NZ and overseas which we hope soon to have more accessible to our members.

Job Vacancy

The position of Friends' Honorary Treasurer has not been filled. Please contact Alison Fox if you are interested in this vital part of our Society's work. Phone 9424989.

Reference corner for the BG Information Centre.

Plans are underway to build up a small reference library of plant/garden books and journals to be held in the Information Centre for use there by members of the public and of course, the Friends. If you have any surplus books that may be useful, please contact Jo Rooke at the BG Information Centre.

New members

We warmly welcome our new members, Andrew Webster, Alexander Neil, Lynne Lochhead and Neil Aitken.

Vivienne Mountfort and Nancy Bachelor have recently passed away. Vivienne was a well known fibre artist and her work will be celebrated at Our City during Heritage week (in October). Enquiries phone 941 7460. She was also a loyal Friends' supporter and sister of long-time member Sylvia Pearson. Nancy attended almost every Friends' event over many years. We will miss their company at our functions and extend our sympathy to their families.

Book review

A THING IN DISGUISE- The Visionary Life of JOSEPH PAXTON By Kate Colquhoun

For those lucky enough to enjoy visiting Homes and Gardens in England, Chatsworth in Derbyshire, conjures up memories of rolling hills, wonderful trees and gardens, plus a man made waterfall and the famous Cascade which fires water to some 296' high, and you will no doubt think "Capability Brown" and correct to a point. However, in the early 19th century, the 6th Duke of Devonshire appointed as his head gardener, 23 year old Joseph Paxton, who soon improved on a given thing, and who was to become known well beyond the bounds of Chatsworth as Plantsman, Landscaper, Architectural Designer and Engineer. Think Crystal Palace.

This is Joseph Paxton's story, told by first time author Kate Colquhoun, and a remarkable story it is about an extraordinary but affable man, born in poor circumstances, little formal education, but talent galore. This book will absorb you from cover to cover.

Elizabeth Wolff

DON'T MISS

- The chance to "Have Your Say" about the future plans for the Botanic Gardens and Hagley Park. An excellent Consultation Brochure is available from the BG Information Centre and CCC libraries. You can respond by using the form in the brochure and mailing it, filling in the online form at www.ccc.govt.nz/haveyoursay, or calling at the BG Info Centre to 'post' your idea onto the big map in the Information Centre. Submissions close Friday 8 October. The Friends' Committee are preparing a submission, but your own direct input is also vital to assist the staff plan for the future. Enquiries contact Jeremy Hawker at 9417580
- The **Orchid display** in the Information Centre and new Orchid house, access through Townend House.
- The two **SCAPE Art works** in the Gardens, part of the city-wide Art and Industry Urban Arts Biennial, one near the former Art Gallery and the other on the Archery Lawn.
- Max's walk on **Spring flowering Trees** on Sat 19 Sept, 2.00pm from BG Information Centre.
- A **walk in Mona Vale** during Heritage week.
- The unfolding Gunneras around the ponds.

Subscriptions for 2004-5 due by 30 November 04 Final Reminder.

Thank you to all who have renewed their membership subscriptions. Our financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June. After 30 November each year our newsletter is only mailed out to financial members so if you have not yet paid, please be sure to send your subscription as soon as possible to The Treasurer, Friends of Christchurch Botanic Gardens, P.O. Box 2553, Christchurch. Please use the renewal form sent out with the AGM papers and indicate on the reverse if you can offer help. We do not send invoices.

For enquiries please phone 924 2989

Botanic Gardens' Information Centre displays

Orchids till end of September

Bonsai 2/3 October

Heritage displays 15-22 October

Please phone the Information Centre for full details on 941 6840 xtn 7590

12 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

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