



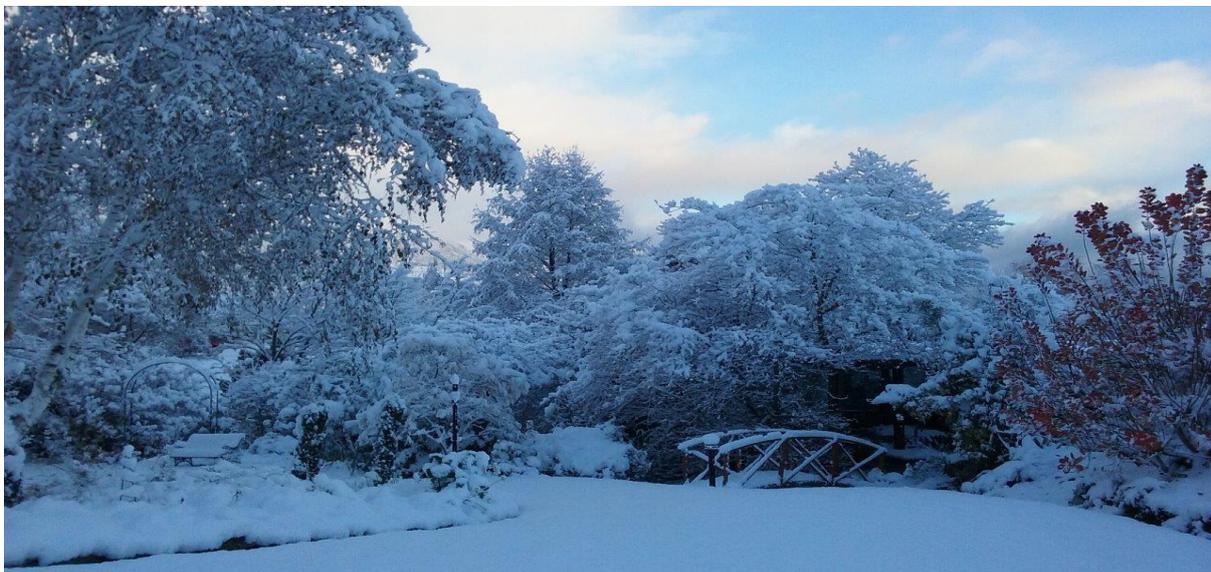
Newsletter Sept 2015

Winter 2015 has been a challenge for most of us in so many different ways.

Droughts & snow in the South Island but floods in places in the North Island, and overall very cold for us all.

There are signs of spring emerging, and I think the first sign is the snow drops which always thrill me, so fresh and pure. Brave little flowers coping with the cold and reminding us spring is near. Next the crocuses, a little more flamboyant, but such a cheerful note. Then the heady perfume of the jonquils and daphne, how can you have favourites? Each flower brings so much joy! There are some new hellebores which are exciting, lovely colours.

There has been a massive amount of pruning and reshaping in this garden. I haven't seen as many breakages due to the snow in all the time I have lived here, nearly 50 years! I think it must be because the sap was low after a prolonged drought, so everything was very brittle. The snows came with no wind which is the worst kind, as it all settles, and then that deathly hush and cracking all over the garden, some sounds are like gunshots, Eucalyptus being the biggest problem.



Pat Stuart's garden in Wanaka in July

On the news side

Many Congratulations to Beverley McConnell for her last award being recognized in the June Honours list, as a Member of the NZ Order of Merit. We are very proud of you Bev.



Bev McConnell has devoted much of her life to creating Ayrilies - a garden of national and international significance.

New honour for Whitford's garden queen

New Zealand's first lady of gorgeous gardens, Bev McConnell the creator of world renowned Ayrilies Gardens in Whitford has been made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to horticulture.

While thrilled by the accolade, Bev says the award is not just for her.

"While I am very honoured to be selected, this award is really for the undervalued horticultural industry," says Bev (84) who has devoted much of her life to creating Ayrilies one of a select few New Zealand gardens recognised as being of international significance.

Ayrilies is the largest privately owned garden open to the public in Auckland, enhancing the Whitford landscape for miles around.

It is not the first honour Bev has received for her commitment to and passion for gardens and horticultural. In 2010 she was awarded a Queens Service Medal.

Bev was a driving force behind the establishment of the New Zealand Garden Trust and was a co-founder of the Trinity Garden Festival in 1992. She is patron of the Garden Design Society of New Zealand and one of two Vice-Patrons of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.

In 2012 Bev was also awarded the prestigious international Royal Horticultural Society Veitch memorial medal - the only woman in New Zealand to hold that honour.

Bev says the latest award is a "good time to reflect on 50 years living in the wonderful Whitford area."

"Last June we held a party here to thank 100 or so people who have supported me and helped to build the garden over the past 50

years - nurserymen, old employees and people like Jack Hobbs, manager of the Auckland Botanic Garden who brings a team one day every year to help in our Wetlands area."

Bev and her husband Malcolm moved to the 120 acre dairy farm in Whitford in 1964 with their young children.

From just bare paddocks the dream of Ayrilies took shape, named after the cattle farm Malcolm's grandfather had owned in Scotland.

Initially just three acres was turned into gardens then slowly the dream unfolded across the acreage, turning bare pasture into seasonal vistas of beauty. After Malcolm died in 1995 Bev continued with their vision.

Today there are 15 acres of colourfully stunning gardens, 50 acres of woodlands and 35 acres in the lower wetlands area.

"I had a dream of linking the garden to the sea through wood lots and wetlands," says Bev. "I remember thinking early on I would like to give my life to supporting the value of gardens for people."

"Gardening is the only art form that employs all the senses - taste, smell, touch, sight and hearing as well as emotions."

Bev explains that the art of plant association creates a living sculpture: "The beauty of the garden is that it is always changing dependent on climate, soil conditions and combinations of colours, texture and form. Today we are governed by a digital world and we live on the Planet of the Aps, so gardens are even more important as spaces that can help restore our souls."

Over the decades Ayrilies has hosted many charity events and been enjoyed by thousands of visitors. Bev hopes that heritage will continue for future generations.

Lunch for Canterbury Members

Jill Simpson and I had our first lunch meeting, with members at Lincoln, near Christchurch. We felt it was very beneficial, with time spent at David Hobb's magnificent Boardfield

Garden. What he has created is outstanding, the point of difference being all plants are indigenous or New Zealand bred. It was great to have feedback from others while we admired a treasure! For those of you who plan to come to the conference in Akaroa, Boardfield is one of the gardens which will be visited on the preconference tour. There will be more lunches planned in the future for Dunedin & Blenheim.

Conference updates, Akaroa 2016 from Jill Simpson.

Preparations are well underway for next year's conference & pre tour from April 14-17 2016.

For the preconference tour on Thursday April 14 we go south of Christchurch to Boardfield NZ Landscape Garden, Trotts Garden and Otahuna. These are all magnificent 5 & 6 star gardens & will provide a most enjoyable day.

We have block booked rooms at the Chateau on the Park Christchurch, (cost \$155 per night) for the nights of April 13 & 14. Anyone who wishes to take advantage of this booking needs to contact the Chateau on the Park Ph. 0800 808 999 or email resmgr@chateau-park.co.nz & quote reference NZGT 1304. Those people wishing to, can also reserve Sunday April 17.

On Friday April 15 we will be travelling to Akaroa & visiting gardens along the way including Ohinetahi, another 6 star garden. You will need to make your own arrangements regarding accommodation in Akaroa for the nights of April 15 & 16. The conference will be held at the Gaiety Theatre in the heart of Akaroa. Most of the accommodation is within a 10 minute walk of the Gaiety. Here are some suggestions in order of proximity to the Gaiety.

The Tresori Motor Lodge Ph. 03 304 7500

Les Troupes Apartments Ph. 03 304 8055

The Bruce Apartments Ph. 03 304 7500 & 03 304 7021

Akaroa Village Inn)3 304 1111 or 0800 695 2000

Akaroa Criterion Motels 03 304 7775

The Akaroa Waterfront Motels 03 304 7484

La Rochelle Motels 03 304 8762

La Rive Akaroa motels 03 304 7651

Other options are Akaroa Accommodation Centre 0800 692 426 or Bachcare or Bookabach.

Remember that this is the first week of the school holidays so accommodation will be in demand.

On April 16 & 17 there will be conference speakers as well as visits to 5 star gardens in the Akaroa district such as The garden at French Farm, the Giant's House & Fishermans Bay garden.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to Akaroa.

From the Regions

Robyn Kilty writes from Earthquake Christchurch

I live near central Christchurch not far from the Avon river, & these days I drive through elysian fields of cleared Avon River Zone, to my local supermarket. Pre-earthquakes, these

fields used to be an old inner east Suburb, full of the 'old dungs' which Gerry Brownlee, minister of CERA (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority) so abhors.

Oh for some of those 'old dungs' back again, as many have been needlessly demolished & with them has gone much of the heritage & character which made Christchurch the city it was. Whether we like it or not, we are being swept clean with a new broom resulting in a four-square glass & tilt slab monoliths plonked in our midst, bulky, boring & out of proportion, creating shade & wind tunnels in our now characterless city. We have become a city so expedient & cost effective, that vision has gone out the window, and with it the opportunity to create something unique and special.

It is the quirkiness of the street artists, guerrilla gardeners & visionary groups such as Gap Fillers & Greening the Rubble which saves Christchurch from utter mediocrity.

The Avon River Red Zone implemented by the Government under CERA, as earthquake damaged land, extends east for miles from city to sea. Whole Suburbs have been demolished, the houses have gone, along with the people and now there is only the outlines of old gardens- rectangular tree & shrub lined fields- as far as the eye can see. All is empty, all is uncannily quiet except for the buzzing of insects. Much of eastern Christchurch has become this marvellously spooky arcadia.

The people have many and varied ideas of busying these silent fields again, from letting it revert back to the lowland swamp from whence it came, encouraging the original native flora and fauna. This is happening anyway as nature takes over, seedlings popping up everywhere. Other ideas are to remove the stop banks where the land has dropped and the river risen in some areas 1-2 meters higher than the land. The Avon River would then flood & become Avon Lakes – ripe for water sports. Many would like to see projects which remember & celebrate heritage, the people, the architecture & gardens which have been lost.

We have been visited by Tim Smit, creator of the Eden Project in Cornwall, & it seems not even Tim can visualise the huge glass bio domes of the Cornwall china pits, transported to the wide coastal vistas of the Canterbury plains. He inspires us with his rhetoric, & declares we already have our Eden with our braided rivers threading the great plains from the mountains to the seas. Whatever we do here, he feels it needs to be something appropriate to our own geography and heritage, and not a mere copy of something on the other side of the world.

In the meantime nothing is resolved, the people keep coming up with creative ways to inhabit this unique landscape, but the government, owners of this now crown owned land do not commit to anything.

Dates to remember... give yourself a treat!

Art in a Garden Oct 29 30 31 Nov 1 www.artinagarden.co.nz

75 sculptors, painters, ceramic & glass artists, & jewellers exhibiting.

Nelmac Garden Marlborough. Nov 5-8 www.gardenmarlborough.co.nz

Keynote speaker Anna Pavord. Garden writer & lecturer from UK

Garden Tours Lectures, Garden Fete, Garden Party Ph. 0800 627527

Powerco Taranaki Garden Spectacular Oct 30 – Nov 8 www.gardenfestnz.co.nz

Allan Trott has always been very helpful to me with his advice on lawns. He suggests fertilizing them now with a good dose of sulphate of iron if you have lots of moss.

I hope all your winter projects have been completed and that winter has been a productive time for you all. I have struggled this winter as the snows set me back just clearing up the mess which is still going on! It will get worse as when the leaves come, the long splits lengthwise along the branches begin to show up with the added weight. Those branches have to be removed as disease can be a problem if they are not.

Most of all those of us in the South Island are really looking forward to some warmth.



Flaxmere early July ... rather sad camellias on the right!



I am so looking forward to this happening soon, it can't come fast enough!

I hope you are all geared for the tourist scene, and as much info to your Regional Tourist Bureaus as possible.

Lastly I would love to hear from anyone who has anything they would like to contribute to the next newsletter, as I feel this is one way of connecting the "rare breed" of gardeners to share information and add to the joy of what we all love.

Most of all enjoy the next few months before the onslaught of the next El Nino!

Penny Zino

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