



NZGT Newsletter June 2015

Greetings to you all

From the President

Dear all garden members

I hope you are well, and have put your gardens to bed for the winter months, well those in the south anyway. Travelling around the country and talking to my own gardening teams the general feeling is winter hasn't quite set in yet. But we have had enough cold snaps to warn it is just around the corner. The change of seasons brings a change of trustees, while it is always sad to see wonderful people who have offered so much to the trust and our members move on, it is healthy for the trust to have new faces and talents join and contribute.

On behalf of the trustees and all garden members I would like to sincerely thank and wish the following trustees all the best; Richard Simpson, Fran Rawling and Pamela McGeorge.

Richard has done an amazing job of keeping the trust accounts in top condition, along with contributing to the wider trust and garden business. Richard has kindly offered to continue to compile our two monthly accounts, for the next six months. While we transition to Irene taking on day to day account administration we will then consider employing an accountant to compile the bi-monthly accounts, unless someone with the appropriate skills offer their services in the mean time.

Fran in her role as South Island garden representative was a wonderful advocate for garden's and garden owners, specifically private gardens. Pamela who stepped down in February brought her board range of publishing and promotion skills, specifically with our newsletter and annual (weekend) gardener handout.

Thank you all for your wonderful contribution, and I hope you now have more time to enjoy your gardens.

It is my great pleasure to welcome Jill Simpson and Penny Zino who have kindly offered to join as trustees. Both have some wonderful ideas on how to promote garden visiting and foster networking between garden members. Jill has taken on the role as South Island garden representative, which she is keen to foster stronger links and support between gardens. Penny has kindly offered to take on the newsletter editor and is keen to get garden members contributing to this valuable publication. Penny's other passion for the trust is promotion and marketing which is great timing as the trust focuses more on this important aspect of garden tourism.

For those who have returned from your garden visiting I hope you had a great time and those about to go, have a wonderful trip. And we look forward to reading all about it (HINT).

Keep warm everyone and enjoy this quieter time in your gardens

Best regards

Kerei

One very big thank you to Pamela McGeorge for her wonderful newsletters over the last few years, I hope I will be able to connect with you all as well as she did. Her written word was always full of enthusiasm, & her photographs kept us all in touch with her garden.

I would like to continue in the same vein that Pamela has established including a space for Regional news from you all. I am hoping this may bring us all together, to have an understanding of the different climates and trials we all have. If you have something you would like to share please email me and I will include it in the next newsletter.

NZGT Conference Wellington March 2 2015

I did attend this conference, and although the numbers for the Trust were very disappointing, the conference itself was interesting being part of the wider group of Horticulture, with RNZIH, DOC, Recreation Association, NIWA, Kim Ellis from Sydney Botanic Garden, Jack Hobbs, to name a few.

Points of interest.

The high light for me was **Kim Ellis Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens**

He spoke to us all on 2 occasions. He was outstanding, outlining what it takes to enhance Botanic Gardens which were applicable to us all. Gardens can be multi use places, which he illustrated so well. Kim's second lecture was about leadership which again was very informative.

DOC Ben Reddieu

Conservation Estate is 8.5 million hectares of which only 1/8 is managed
Endeavouring to engage NZers, with emphasis on schools, & enhancing the recreational experience.

NZ Indigenous Flora seed Bank

There are 235 critically at risk plants, and 683 at risk.

Those figures are sobering.

The aim of the seed bank is to preserve seed with dry cold at minus 20 degrees below, and to collect 10-20,000 seeds of threatened species.

Myrtaceae species, Alpine flora, Fabaceae, and Podocarpaceae are all threatened and they are working to save them.

If you would like more information, look up NZ Plant Conservation Seed Bank.

Jack Hobbs Auckland Botanic Gardens spoke of the sustainable plant collections, and sustainable gardening. "In the palm of my hand are more living organisms than people on this planet!" Plant selections which perform and remain healthy are the key. The role of plants in improving water quality; a subject close to us all.

Jill Malcolm

Jill's advice on garden writing was immensely valuable.

This is an area we can all benefit from, if we are to be successful in promoting our gardens to this modern world of technology!

Sophie Barker

How to market your Garden Tips and Tricks, was an excellent presentation.

I do wish more of you all had been there to hear her.

Next Conference Akaroa

From Jill Simpson who will be organizing the next conference

We have been making plans for our 2016 conference.
It will be in Akaroa visiting gardens on Banks Peninsula.

The conference dates are

Thursday April 14th for our pre conference tour from Christchurch and

Friday 15th to Sunday 17th in Akaroa.

A pre conference day (April 14th) will have us gather in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens then travel south to Broadfield Garden and on to the Trott Garden for lunch. We return visiting the garden at Otahuna Lodge before arriving in Christchurch to stay for one night.

The following days include travelling to Akaroa visiting Ohinetahi for lunch and arriving in Akaroa where we visit the fabulous Giants House before settling in for a weekend enjoying the beautiful French settled village of Akaroa.

Over the next two days we visit a number of gardens including The Garden at French Farm, Fishermans Bay Garden, Potters Croft and Nancy and Bryan Tichbornes new garden in Akaroa village. The usual Conference speakers, the Open Forum and the Conference Dinner will keep us entertained until our return to Christchurch on Sunday the 17th April.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to immerse ourselves in gardens and garden tourism.

We hope to share ideas and suggestions in the open Forum or over a glass of wine in one of Akaroa's many charming cafes and restaurants.

We hope that you will join us for this weekend. **It is the first weekend of the school holidays so we encourage you to book accommodation in Akaroa for the Friday and Saturday nights.**

Regional News

North Canterbury is a desert, no substantial rain since June last year, to date we have received less than half our normal rainfall for the entire year. January was extremely hot with 27 days over 30 degrees and it has continued on. It seems as if there is an umbrella over us all, with every storm heading out to sea. Phrases like "wilting into winter" and "veils of dust hanging in the air," created by anything that moves, are all too common. It all reminds me of the harshest places in Africa, where dust rises from any animal that moves.

What has interested me is what has survived and what has succumbed. Large Eucalypts which are 20-30 years old and huge griselinias have all died. Sadly I find our native plants are not as tough as the exotics, and having walked for 28 days in the Himalayas where there is no rain for 6-7 months I can understand it. Pittosporums hate hard frosts and many die in the extreme cold conditions, even flaxes won't flower if the winter has been too severe.

What is giving me so much pleasure is my prairie garden which is now 2 years old. Robyn Kilty and I were lucky enough to attend a workshop with Piet Oudolf and Noel Kingsberry in Holland 2 winters ago. We were both intrigued with his low maintenance approach and the softness of his plantings. His style has been repeated here using our native grasses, and selecting lower perennials that will cope with our notorious NW winds. I have loved the seed heads of some, which will be a good supply of seeds for the birds over winter, and structure as winter intensifies.



Winter is without doubt my favourite time. I love the soft light and the etherealness of bare branches with a few golden leaves hanging like jewels against a wintery sky. There is a peace in the garden which belies a season's toil. It is often said "A garden that looks good in winter will be good at anytime of the year."

I believe that to be true as the bones become apparent, and the balance between evergreen and deciduous is harmonized. Best of all, the days are shorter!

It is also the creative time when new projects are underway and new enthusiasm awakens.



Food for thought

To quote The Press

Flower Show offers break from Grey Britain

"The English are famous for their love of gardens, but many home owners are now paving over theirs turning Britain "grey" the Royal Horticultural Society warns.

As more and more people opt to turn their once luscious lawns in the front of their houses into off street parking the problem is getting worse with 3 million front gardens completely paved over since 2005.

More than 5 million front gardens, 1 in 3 now have no plants growing in them while 4.5 million 1 in 4 are completely paved over. The situation in London is particularly acute where half of all front gardens have been paved over, with a 36% increase in the last decade. The effect is not just cosmetic. Gardens soak up rain and help mitigate the risks of flooding, while vegetation helps cooling during heat waves and also provides homes for birds and insects."

I found this article quite disturbing, as gardeners we are becoming a very rare breed!
Gardens are going to become very precious.

Happy projects and have a great gardening winter.

Penny Zino