I write from a very saddened city, everyone I speak to feels the same, how can this appalling slaughter of innocent people have happened in a city that is trying to rebuild itself after the earthquakes? Somehow it weighs very heavily on us all. A very deep emotion that is hard to shift. I think back to the resilience of so many after the Christchurch earthquakes, and no one has showed more courage than our new registered garden members Brian and Helen Coker. Brian Lost both legs in the PGC Building, but he has not let that crush his passion for plants and interest in his garden. Because of what happened Helen and Brian moved to a new home in West Melton where they have moved many of their favourite Rhododendrons and together they have created a beautiful new garden suitable for a wheel chair. Helen and Brian spend many happy hours with their plants and it is amazing what has been achieved in such a short time. They even have a place where Brian sells plants on the roadside. Brian & Helen you are an inspiration to us all. Another illustration that gardens can heal, and are the best place to be involved in, in times of sadness.

Autumn Splendour Conference Central Otago / Queenstown

On a brighter note I did go to meet Mike Henry and Jane Falconer who have put together a wonderful few days for us in Central Otago and Queenstown for our annual conference. I met some of the garden owners and saw their gardens. I can assure you that the conference this year will be very special, very different gardens and wonderful plants, so if you haven’t already booked take advantage of airlines ever decreasing prices and come, you will not be disappointed. Treat yourself!

The programme will include an interesting array of speakers and the autumn colours should be on the way. Some of the trees were showing signs in mid-March.

The programme, gardens and speaker’s programmes were sent to you all 2 weeks ago, and will be included in the email

From Kerei Thompson

Following the shocking events in Christchurch our hearts go out to the families and all the people affected, it is truly hard to comprehend. But heartwarming to see the people of New Zealand come together and support the Muslim community, I was at Parliament grounds today with many others to show our respect and support, truly moving and reflective. It reminded me of the importance of people and gardens during this healing time.

The countdown is on to our magnificent Queenstown based conference, perfect timing for the autumn colors. There is still time to get your registration in, if you can’t make all four days, come along for the weekend. Thanks for our fantastic local organizing committee Mike Henry and Jane Falconer, plus Penny Zino, Gill and Richard Simpson, these events don’t happen without people on the ground.
It was wonderful to see two gardens in Taranaki celebrating their assessment results with parties this week; King Edward Park becoming 5 Stars including a cake and Tupare becoming 6 star; fantastic to see how these gardens and many more value the assessment process.

Mitch Grahm Head gardener for Tupare for 12 years & his wife Russy share a moment with Gordon Collier (Patron MBE)

It is my pleasure to welcome new members, it is wonderful and of course essential to have new gardens joining the trust.

Welcome and I hope to catch up with many of you at the conference.

I also would like to welcome Dylan Norfield and Wendy Palmer who have both agreed to join us as trustees. We are delighted to have them both onboard and look forward to working with them.

Grant Mangin has suggested as many gardens as possible mention New Zealand Gardens Trust in the opening paragraph of their websites, this will jointly lift the ‘visibility’ online of both the individual garden and NZGT. Grant also recommend NZGT link our website to all our individual gardens something we will do with your assistance. This is all about search ability and ranking of both NZGT and individual gardens. We are happy to help with this and will discuss it further at the conference, following the conference we will provide more details to allow you to get this done.

Look forward to seeing many of you at the conference.

Our Trustees have pleasure in again welcoming our new and upgraded gardens.

We are delighted to advise that 3 further gardens recently attained 6 star, new members Anacapri and Hamilton Gardens, & existing member, Greenhaugh.

New Gardens

6 Star

Anacapri

Gordon Collier, Taupo

Spend a while in this garden - don’t be deceived by its size! A series of intricate and detailed spaces around the house each with its own definition and character, provide appropriate niche environments for a wide variety of rare and unusual plants. Of definite interest year round as complimentary and contrasting plant form, line, colour and texture provide as much interest as the flowers and autumnal seed heads and leaf colour.

Hamilton Gardens

Hamilton City, Waikato

Hamilton Gardens is a unique and very special garden to explore a world class experience. The individual spaces throughout the garden have been well considered and exhibit an attention to detail and quality in execution that is exceptional. The addition of new gardens such as the Katherine Mansfield garden is adding to the overall theme of the garden spaces and assisting in ensuring that a strong narrative and connection with the theme is achieved.

5 Star

The Rock Hoppers Garden – Northland

Graham and Rose Speedy

A good example of a modern urban garden with a variety of small spaces which relate well to the various buildings on the site and their uses. Clever design provides unobtrusive solutions to physically impaired use. A very pleasant garden offering a variety of garden spaces and experiences.

4 Star

Tauhara

Lorna Henry, Taupo

Visitors to this garden particularly enjoy the character and atmosphere of the water garden and the structural elements. Seating areas that looked out over
and connected with the water are a delight. The deep borders surrounding the lawn at the front of the house are very dramatic and colour combinations were interesting and had a real vibrancy. The Rhododendrons are a sight in full bloom and good plant work ensuring there is more interest as the season progresses.

3 Star

Rainbow Falls Tea House
Fay & John Cooper, Northland
This is very young garden designed to complement a tea house. The layout dividing the garden into simple spaces relates well to the building and provides the opportunity for visitors to appreciate the variety of plants in the garden. As this garden matures it will provide more definition and interest.

Stoneycrop
Brian & Helen Coker, Canterbury
A good example of a modern urban garden with a variety of small spaces which relate well to the various buildings on the site and their uses. Clever design provides unobtrusive solutions to physically impaired use. A very pleasant garden offering a variety of garden spaces and experiences.

Existing Gardens Upgraded

6 Star

Flaxmere
Penny Zino, Canterbury
A brilliantly fresh and unique take on the garden. Assaults the senses from the very beginning but also draws the visitor in and sends them on through a variety of beautifully connected small intimate spaces each with its own particular character. A garden of discovery and wonder. The use of colour is masterly and block planting has been used to great effect.

Greenhaugh
Lynne Atkins, Manawatu
Greenhaugh is a delight, we were extremely impressed with the exceptional planting mixes and attention to detail of colour and texture throughout the garden. The maintenance of the garden is of the highest quality and yet house it feels effortless and natural. The overall garden flows beautifully and responds beautifully to both its rural setting and the heritage

The Giant’s House
Josie Martin, Canterbury
A garden that stimulates all of the senses and is true art - from the exuberant use of ceramics and tiles through to the complete command of form, line, colour and texture in the planting.

Tupare
Taranaki Regional Council, Taranaki
This garden displays excellent plant choices that are appropriate to the heritage of the garden while still adapting to the needs of a modern public garden. We commend the continued integration of the house to the garden ensuring its overall character as a domestic garden is retained. Maintenance and planting quality are excellent.

5 Star Gardens

King Edward Park
South Taranaki District Council, Taranaki
This park is an outstanding example of a public park space. Planting is well considered and full, is healthy and has a huge variety of plant species and styles to appeal to all visitors, while still achieving an overall cohesiveness throughout the park.

Rapaura Watergardens
Sally R Sank, Coromandel
A special feature of this garden is the epiphytic planting that can be viewed throughout the first part of the walkway. The integration of community-built features (such as play areas and Chinese garden) within the space has been done very well and planting that surrounds these spaces is innovative and inspiring. We particularly love the small children’s play space in the pollinator garden.

Tullamore
Lynda Peat and Tim Birdsall, Taupo
There was a lot of interest in this garden and the planting mixes are dramatic and well considered. The flow of full garden beds and the addition of rural appropriate elements such as the rusty steel and lichen cover the fence posts. The potting shed area with benches and barrows full of plants added a great feeling of being a loved working garden. Maintenance of the garden was very good and the space was a delight to be in.

For further information and to make arrangements to visit our gardens please go to our website www.gardens.org.nz for further details.
Jenny Oakley sent these 2 articles from Taranaki, It is great to see the recognition of what the NZGT is achieving.

The Taranaki Regional Council was delighted with the 6 star award for Tupare, a beautifully crafted arts and crafts garden located on the outskirts of New Plymouth.

A garden party was held on a beautiful autumn evening and was attended by Councilors, staff past and present, volunteers, family members of the former owners and others with a strong association with the property.

NZGT was represented by Jenny Oakley.

It was a perfect evening to reflect on the beauty and artistry of this Taranaki icon and the hard work and dedication of the Council staff and supporting volunteers.

Gaining a 5th star for King Edward Park in Hawera was a pretty significant achievement for the 117year old Park. South Taranaki District Mayor Ross Dunlop is not one to let the success pass unnoticed and so, recently, hosted a morning tea to celebrate. Former parks’ superintendents, friends and supporters, along with Council officers and current staff enjoyed the informal occasion, held on a beautiful early autumn day on a new terrace adjacent to the Park’s Observatory. As Mayor Ross said, “The Park is a place we can all be proud of and a perfect setting for an event like this”.

Pauline Murphy is compiling a survey which will be sent to all garden owners and past gardens as well. This valuable feedback will make future improvements to the Trust. It will be available at conference and will be will by emailed to all.

Garden assessments

Oh my goodness. Entering my garden in the Trust’s assessment scheme seemed a good idea a few months ago; the garden would get hurried up and holding everything, my ego would get a good polish. But now it’s a different matter. Just one more sleep and the big day is only hours away. It’s worse than OMG. I have just heard that Jan-cinda, herself, is coming, Rosa Galienii too. Horticultural royalty!!

Oh well, it could be worse at least the garden is looking almost its Autumnal best. The Globe artichokes are dead but still standing though Helianthus ‘Lemon Queen’ is looking her upright, lemon daisy-ed best. The edges are trimmed, (not,) but at least one can navigate the paths and all the dead patches in the boarders have strategically placed potted plants to conceal the errors. Don’t pull out any weeds as that would leave gaps, wouldn’t it? At the last minute all evidence of the actual garden-ing process is tidied up - no garden tools lying about, thank you, and that bird netting used to cover the spring lettuces is hung on the back wall out of the way of prying eyes. Hope fully.

I am on tender hooks. Pull on a clean shirt, if one can be found, clean teeth with Colly-noss and get the G and T ready. But wait, though they might be thirsty it’s only three past noon.

PS. The next day.

It wasn’t too bad after all. They did walk around though quite quickly, sometimes in circles and they didn’t take any notes. Perhaps that was a good sign? A quick ‘smoothie’ and they were off. As you would expect from Royalty they were very polite and said all the right things. But one last thing Jan-cinda says “Do something about that step. Please.”

Not too bad after all.

Anonymous
Geraniums

I caught the geranium bug a few years ago when I came upon Philippa Foes-Lamb’s catalogue containing many plants I had never heard of till then. ‘Geraniums’ used to be those fleshy leaved plants that sport bunches of appealing flowers in bright colours; we all grow them. Now these are correctly known as pelargoniums but true geraniums are a much more varied bunch.

Starting off with a few varieties, my garden was soon welcoming ‘Claridge Druce’, an enthusiast sporting bright pink flowers from early spring till late autumn. This seeds around and helps give borders that care-free look but it’s not for those that like an immaculate plot. I soon discovered blue flowered Geranium pratense and all its progeny. It’s a very willing plant also gently seeding around and available in several shades, sometimes white. Several years ago I noticed a seedling in my garden worth keeping and a visiting nursery man took it back to Auckland. He eventually patented this plant and it has been named ‘Annette’ after my late wife. You might see it for sale in the Warehouse, of all places. This is the darker flower in the image.

The other pale geranium came to me, by mistake, Philippa tells me. This plant starts off as a pale grey hassock of pleasantly scented leaves; come summer, it literally erupts into a cloud of foliage with myriads of pale lilac flowers. In season this plant will measure a metre across and as much high. It’s a stunning sight with a great future as a garden plant, I think!

Apparently it’s a chance hybrid between two uncommon species from South Africa which are growing in Philippa’s garden at Heirloom Nursery in Richmond, Nelson. It is not available at present.

Gordon Collier

My garden is not a children’s play-ground!

I like dead trees, trees that lean over the pats, trees that lean as if in the wind (I have this h to impede running visitoralso.)

I like plants that pop up in gravelled paths and pavements – it’s just nature at work. Clean gravelled paths have their place but do they look any-thing but raked? Should all garden paths, or gardens for that matter, ape Hidcote or Sissinghurst, or look as if they are bits out of a text book?

I see beauty in old seed heads, leafless branches, old totara posts, a few garden tools lying about and even bits of wire netting. I don’t like gardens where every plant sports a white label – that is for botanic or teaching gardens. My garden is not a museum – use google!

I don’t like immaculate nor tranquil gardens, wall papered and primped as if waiting for God. I like dead leaves lying on paths and what is a weed but a plant in the wrong place? Take common fennel. It is a beautiful thing, pruned and used sympathetically (One visitor, an art critic, stopped dead in her uneducated tracks and exclaimed in utter disbelief “Why - that’s fennel.”)

I don’t like gardens that go on and on with -out breaking tradition – I get bored by the minute; heaven knows we have a few of these. And why do we insist on acres of lawn, maintenance night mares scalped every week, and blight ridden box hedging aping the English tradition. Get real – there are other plants that hedge, and good ‘native’ ones too. This is New Zealand.

Mine garden is eccentric, I admit it – off the radar: ‘the great unwashed’ want to chain-saw my blue trees, sweep the paths and make it look as if it is a dentist’s waiting room? It isn’t! Gordon Collier

This makes me giggle. Lawns can be such wonderful spaces with 8 grandsons I should know. If my garden was all plants and no lawn there would not have been a place they would like to come to kick a ball or wield a cricket bat! Yes lawns are a pain at times but a cool green space can soothe, even if they are hard to keep in 40 degrees!

Great to see the councils putting a value on the assessment process

For the Trustees Penny Zino