

Newsletter



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Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (Inc.)

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE NEWS

RNZIH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 17 - 19 MAY 1991

To be held at Auckland University. Very reasonably priced accommodation and meals available at O'Rourke Hall (5 minutes walk away).

The object of the conference is to stress the pleasure that people get from plants, and to demonstrate some of the Auckland specialties those out of Auckland may not know. It is hoped to have sessions on Garden History, Flower Breeding and Selection, Public Plantings/Parks for People. Field trips are planned, including one day at Rangitoto. The Arboricultural Association is planning to meet at the same time.

The Banks Lecturer will be Alan Ester. Full details will be in the next newsletter.



THE CHRISTMAS RUSH

Congratulations ...

... to Mike Oates, Chairman of the National Executive. Mike takes up a new job in February 1991, as curator of the Wellington Botanic Gardens, which includes the Otari Native Plant Museum.

The Institute notes with regret the passing away of Mrs L. Skipper, FRIH, on 21 June 1990. Mrs Skipper was awarded the distinction of 'Fellow' last year, and was a member of the North Taranaki District Council of the RNZIH.

1991 Subscriptions due

The following amounts were confirmed at the Annual General Meeting held in May of this year:

Joint Membership (for two people sharing the same household)	\$49.00
Student and Associate Membership	\$39.00
Corporate Bodies	\$136.00
Individual Member and Small Non Commercial Societies	\$60.00

CONFERENCES COMING UP. . .

Plant Conservation Conference Canberra, Australia 4-8 March 1991

Hosted by the Australian National Botanic Gardens. This conference will identify management requirements for ex situ conservation of plants in Australasia by:

1. discussing the current role of botanic gardens and kindred organisations, including zoological gardens, tertiary institutions, national parks and forestry services, amateur, commercial and conservation groups, in the conservation of plants.
2. documenting the value of botanic gardens and kindred organisations to conservation
3. preparing guidelines for an Australian ex situ plant conservation strategy
4. preparing guidelines for the establishment of a coordinating body for ex situ plant conservation in Australia.
5. discussing the opportunities for other cooperative programmes.

For information and conference registrations, write to:

Mr Lyn Meredith, Australian National Botanic Gardens, PO Box 1777, Canberra ACT 2601, AUSTRALIA.

Sixth International Protea Association Conference Perth, Western Australia 22-27 September 1991

This is a prestigious world conference, which is of great importance to growers around the globe. It is significant to importers and exporters of flowers, florists and to the general public.

The conference will be preceded by a "Wildflowers of the Wild West" tour, and followed by "The South West Wine Down". Speakers include Dr John Rourke from Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, Cape Town, South Africa - an outstanding world authority on African Proteaceae, and Dr Margaret Sedgley of WAITE Institute, South Australia.

For registration of interest, write to Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd, 9A Canning Bridge Commercial Centre, 890-892 Canning Highway, Applecross 6153, Western Australia.

3rd International Symposium on Computer Modelling in Fruit Research and Orchard Management Palmerston North 11-14 February 1992

Contact: Dr Trevor Atkins, Convenor, MAF, Levin Horticultural Research Centre, Private bag, LEVIN.

International Horticultural Exhibition
Stuttgart
23 April-17 October 1993

Contact:
Kim Nixon PH (09)371-066

Computerized Database for Plant Collections

For some time now I have felt there is a need for a coordinated plant collection scheme in New Zealand. When the Institute ran the initial conference last year on a scheme I was delighted the need was at last being picked up by a group with the knowledge and expertise to make an impact on this serious deficiency in species collection management in New Zealand.

The importance of coordinating collections and having a standard database for recording collections became apparent to us at Victoria University when we began computerizing our plant species records. The exercise gave us many heartaches and now the first stage is complete it is obvious the learning curve could be avoided by others if a coordinated approach is taken to the question.

In July of this year I was made aware of the Claude McCarthy Fellowship Trust which provides funding for graduates of New Zealand Universities who are members of the permanent staff to carry out research projects overseas. I have been lucky enough to be awarded funding to spend 3 months working at selected

Botanic Gardens and allied conservation institutions. The aim is to get hands on experience working with computerized databases for recording plant species collections and herbarium records, look at policies for coordination of species collections and herbaria, and write a paper to Vice Chancellors Committee on directions I feel should be taken in New Zealand. I must emphasize I fully support the proposed RNZIH Plant Collection Scheme. My particular interest is the recording mechanisms to be used for the coordination of validated collections in New Zealand.

At present my trip is still in the planning stages but already several Institute members have provided introductions to institutions where they felt time would be well spent studying. At Missouri Botanical Gardens, Dr Peter Raven has kindly arranged for me to spend some time looking at the BG-database and the plant database TROPICOS. Also I will be attending the conference in Canberra in March on ex situ plant species collections. I am also looking at the OPCA scheme in Melbourne Botanic Garden as well as Waimea Arboretum

in Hawaii, and Jamaica Plains Arboretum in Boston. April will be spent looking at plant collection databases in the UK. The intention is to study the methods used at Kew, Cambridge, Edinburgh, the National Trust, and RHS, for keeping computerized plant and herbarium records. May is to be spent in Europe looking at the same areas. At present the plan is to study at Geneva, Copenhagen, Munich, and French botanic gardens. On the way back to New Zealand I will stop in Singapore to look at an Asian approach to these questions.

If any members of the Institute are able to direct me to areas they are aware of which I have left out, I would be very grateful.

Rob Smith
Chairperson WDC RNZIH

Contact address:
Gardens Section, Victoria University
of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington
PH (04) 721000, Fax (04)729-162,
or c/- Wellington District Council of
the RNZIH.

BIG TREES IN THE USA

Last year I had the interesting experience of working for the US Forest Service in Oregon and Washington. Much of the time I was there was spent taking part in forest surveys working, and sightseeing with Bob Van Pelt - the US Big tree Program coordinator for Washington State.

The Big Tree Program in the United States has its origins back in the 1940's when the American Forestry Association started keeping records of big trees. In determining bigness a points system is used, and takes into account height, size of crown, and diameter of the trunk. The tallest specimen known of each species is also kept track of. Bob took over the program in Washington State in 1988, and with much enthusiasm has taken to measuring trees wherever he goes. It seemed no trip was complete without carrying 50 metre tapes, diameter tapes, clinometer (used to measure angles in calculating tree height), and many stops whenever a tree of any origin or species was spotted that had "big" potential. I'm sure I got to see more "big" trees in Washington in my relatively short visit than most Washingtonians see in a lifetime. Bob's list included a Newport plum at 5.5 metres height through common cherries (*Prunus avium*) at 33 metres height and 1.5 metres diameter, to Douglas Firs (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) at over 100 metres tall - that's pretty tall. Not only could he quote American statistics at me, but he knew the heights and species of the tallest native and non-native trees in New Zealand - something which I didn't know. He was most impressed that New Zealand had grown a radiata pine to a height of 230 feet in 40 years - there's not much in the US that can challenge that sort of growth rate, and definitely not *Pinus radiata* in its native habitat.



Fall colours in the University of Washington Arboretum, Seattle. Photo: R. Gibson

Big Trees (cont.)

Most of the big exotic trees thrive in botanic gardens, arboretums, parks and university campuses around the state, and I spent many an enjoyable hour being toured through these areas, looking at the marvellous variety of shrubs and trees that have been accumulated from throughout the world. The University of Washington in Seattle is indeed fortunate to have a large arboretum well stocked and cared for with many trees - some even from New Zealand. Our Southern Beeches and especially the hebes create much interest in that part of the work as they do elsewhere. All in all an enjoyable summer was spent working with, learning about, and seeing the plants and parks of the Pacific North West of the USA.



SAVE THE POHUTUKAWA FUND

Villa Maria Estate is producing a range of wines called the Forest Flowers Collection. Each label in the range features a native forest flower which was painted by students at the Whitecliffe Art School. For each bottle sold in this range, Villa Maria Estate has pledged to contribute a specified sum of money to the Save the Pohutukawa Fund. Already the company has given over \$13,000 to this fund as a result of sales made during the launch of this range of wines.

Says George Fistonich, Villa Maria's Managing Director: "The intent of this range of wines is to achieve two goals, namely the appreciation of the beauty of New Zealand's natural forest flowers and its fine wines which are also a natural product of this country. In particular, the continued preservation of New Zealand's Christmas tree, which is under grave threat, is paramount."

The Forest Flower Collection celebrates six of New Zealand's most beautiful tree flowers. These include: Pohutukawa, Kowhai, Houhere, Ngaio, Hinau, and Manuka. Watch out for these wines at your local liquor outlet.

A KAURI NATIONAL PARK FOR NORTHLAND

A new National Park has been proposed for Northland, to protect its natural treasures of wildlife and forests. The kauri tree is its symbol but the park would preserve much more of the wilderness and scenery, owned by the public, in Northland.

The Northland National Parks and Reserves Board has proposed protecting some 96,000 hectares of Crown land in the North as a National Park. The proposal is unlike New Zealand's other National Parks in that it preserves forests, scattered as remnants about the North, in more than 30 reserves. While some are small scenic gems, such as Trounson Kauri Reserve, others are huge, like the 25,000 hectares of Waipoua-Matarau-Waima forest.

Formerly, mature kauri covered much of northern New Zealand from the region about Auckland. Now perhaps only 4 per cent remain in outstanding reserves intended to be the core of the proposed park. This will protect not only kauri but a whole range of sub-tropical trees, such as the pohutukawa, not presently represented in the National Park system.

Many of the North's publicly-owned scenic wonders are also included, along with significant historic reserves recalling the varied Maori and European history of the North. Joined together by the symbol of a Kauri National Park, the reserves of the North could be seen for the significant places they are: rich in natural, scientific, ecological and recreational values.

Besides protecting nature such a park could be expected to attract tourists who favour National Parks and create associated employment.

The forests of the North are home to several rare or endangered creatures. Puketi Forest has the largest remaining population of the North Island kokako. There are populations of kaka and kakariki parrots, brown kiwi and kereru pigeon. The only known colony of short-tailed bats is in Omahuta forest while endangered long-tailed bats haunt Herekino and possibly Waipoua-Matarau-Waima. Lizards and kauri snails are peculiar to the forests.

Among the scenic features of the North, to become features of the park, are the

giant sandhills at the mouth of the Hokianga Harbour, the soaring Maunganui Bluff, and the giant kauri trees of Waipoua. By contrast bleak kauri gumlands recall a history of settlement and exploitation. European and Maori history in the North is closely tied to the kauri forests.

To qualify as a National Park areas of wilderness need to meet rigid criteria. One of these is substantial size, though there are three areas in the North which on their own might qualify. The idea of combining such larger forests with smaller scenic, nature, scientific and historic reserves is a "first". In public submissions on the park proposal the Department of Conservation will be asking whether such an unusual approach is justified.

The Northland National Park Board has argued that the "islands" of forest which remain after centuries of settlement warrant the special status of National Park because they are all that remains of a great forest.

The National Parks Act requires DOC to obtain submissions from the public on the establishment of a National park. You are invited to consider the areas in this proposal, and offer your opinion to the department. There will also be a chance to offer spoken submissions at a series of public meetings and hui to be held throughout Northland. Details of these will be advertised.

For more information, a detailed discussion paper has been prepared by DOC. It is available for purchase for \$5 from:

Department of Conservation
Northland Conservancy Office
2 Kaka st
PO Box 842
WHANGAREI

The discussion paper can also be viewed at any DOC Conservancy Office, at National Park Visitor centres, and at public libraries throughout Northland and Auckland.

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE 15 APRIL 1991



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HORTICULTURE?

Then perhaps the Certificate in Horticultural Theory is for you. This has been organised by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. Tuition is available by correspondence from the Open Polytechnic in Lower Hutt, as well as directly from some other polytechnics. There is a charge for this tuition.

The certificate consists of nine subjects, and may be completed either one at a time in any order, or two or more per year. Some persons have completed all nine in one year. After receiving tuition, examinations at no extra cost, can be sat in November but these are not mandatory.

The nine subjects are as follows:

1. Horticultural Botany
2. Plant Pests and Disorders
3. Soil Properties and Processes
4. Horticultural Practices
5. Plant Classification
6. Weed Control and Horticultural Chemicals
7. Soil Management
8. Horticultural Plant Science
9. Amenity Horticulture Principles or Fruit Production Principles
or Vegetable Production Principles or Nursery Production Principles
or Floricultural Production Principles

While there are alternatives in Subject 9, students can choose one or more of these alternatives to increase their knowledge in different areas of horticulture.

After completing and passing the nine subjects, the Certificate in Horticultural Theory is issued to you by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. An added value is that all of the nine subjects can be cross-credited into the National Certificate/Diploma in Horticulture programmes. This could be important if you later want to enter into a branch of commercial horticulture.

For further details please write to the:

Executive Officer
Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture
PO Box 12
Lincoln University, CANTERBURY.

SIR VICTOR DAVIES AWARD

Applications close on the 28th February 1991 for the Sir Victor Davies Award. This award has been established to encourage young people to increase their knowledge of plants and plant culture. The award is in honour of the late Sir Victor Davies, one of the most outstanding plantmen New Zealand has produced.

The "Sir Victor Davies Award" is awarded annually to a person under the age of 30 years who has demonstrated an outstanding plant knowledge in New Zealand. This may involve any or all of the following aspects.

- Propagation and production
- Cultivation
- Preservation
- Botanical Study and Research

The recipient will be presented with a certificate commemorating the award and a suitable gift decided on annually by the Award Committee. The Award will be announced at the Annual General Meeting of the RNZIH.

APPLICATION FOR THE AWARD

Personal applications, or nominations by a person or organisation are acceptable. Applications should be as detailed as possible and include the following:-

- Full name, address and telephone number.
- Date of birth.
- A citation detailing the career of the applicant with reasons why he or she should be considered for the award. This should include qualifications, work experience, published articles, theses or projects submitted as part of a qualification and other details as appropriate.
- Any supporting documents.
- Personal applications should include the name, address and telephone number of a person who can give a confidential personal reference on behalf of the applicant if required.

Applications should be sent to:-

The Executive Officer, RNZIH, PO Box 12, Lincoln University, CANTERBURY.
Phone and Fax (03)252-923.

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