

Newsletter



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Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (Inc.)

Chairman's Comments

Our New Chairman

I have stepped down as Chairman now that my 3 year term is over. I have been re-elected to the National Executive and retain my portfolio of Notable Trees NZ.

Our new chairman is Andrew Maloy who is well known to Auckland members. Trained in Scotland, he has a background in commercial nursery production as well as having taught Amenity Horticulture and Nursery Production subjects at Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland. He is now Technical Writer for Consumers Institute, Consumer Home and Garden. Andrew is an enthusiast and will be a great asset to the work of the National Executive and national horticulture.

Progress

As you will have noted from the Newsletters considerable progress has been made by the Institute. During this term of 3 years I have been very aware that we are a voluntary organization and do not enjoy the luxury of having full time staff. Enid Reeves has had a busy time in the office. Enid has handled normal business, the Newsletter, RNZIH Journal and has produced the New Zealand Alpine Garden Society's Bulletins and Newsletters. Her workload has been considerable. I would like to express our sincerest thanks to her for her attentiveness to all the fine details of administrating a voluntary organization.

Over the last 3 years we have progressed on the following :

ADMINSTRATION.

Streamlined administration by purchasing a new computer. Our Executive has used cost saving teleconferences as a vehicle for communication and met once a year at their own cost.

FINANCES

We now have a comfortable bank balance. Awards and Awards funds have been maintained. A lean

portion of our original offices at Lincoln has been retained for cost saving.

PUBLICATIONS

Prepared and published The New Zealand Alpine Garden Society Bulletins and Newsletters. Maintained a regular Newsletter. Published the NZ Garden Journal.

COMMUNICATIONS

Developed an international quality website which is our most single advanced communication method. Hebe Checklist design, printing and publication costs approved. Notable Trees NZ records have been computerised giving access for data entry via the Internet.

NEW VENTURES

The endorsement and holding of a major seminar on the RNZIH National Garden Register. Synergy achieved with seminars and conferences attached to major horticultural shows for publicity and members convenience. The Auckland Seminar was timed to occur during Ellerslie Flower Show Week and was a good example of this new initiative. It gave an opportunity to visit the show as well as receive discounted entrance tickets. Members of the public were also attracted to our seminar and the Banks Memorial Lecture

None of these ventures have been accomplished without considerable individual time and effort by those who believe in and firmly support our Royal Institute's future as the National Voice of Horticulture in New Zealand. May I express my personal thanks to them. The incoming Chairman will have a firm base from which to operate and be able to develop new initiatives which must be the life blood of our Institute.

Seasonal Greetings to all.

Ron Flook, Immediate Past Chairman 2000.



From our New Chairman

Well, it came as no small surprise to find myself elected chair. Thanks in part to Ron Flook's energy and dedication, the Institute has made it through a rough patch and the road ahead is clearer. We are entering a new phase in the Institute's long and notable history. New initiatives such as the vastly improved computer website, the soon to be published Hebe checklist, the Journals back on stream and the distinct possibility of a Garden Registration Scheme, will all promote what the Institute is about and bring benefits to our members.

The Auckland seminar, 'Garden Visits and Potential for Tourism', held to coincide with the Ellerslie Flower Show, was a great success. Congratulations to all those who helped make it so, in particular Ron Davison, Liz Morrow, Michael Ayrton and others. Around 60 people attended from far and wide, many actively contributing to the various discussions. The greatest strength of the Institute lies in ourselves. As members we all have something to offer, though we often don't realise it. The true value in being a member is in sharing our knowledge and experiences and learning from others. Please don't hesitate to suggest (or better still, contribute) items for the Journal or newsletter.

I look forward with enthusiasm to next year with the Institute. All the best for the festive season.

Andrew Maloy, Chairman

Forthcoming Events Meetings

Gardens 2002

Public Gardens in the 21st Century: Conservation, Culture or Crass Commercialism? Canberra, Australia, 17-21 April, 2001
Information: Australian Convention and Travel Services, GPO Box 2200 Canberra ACT 2601, Australia.

Email: gardens2001@ausconservices.com.au
Internet: <http://www.anbg.gov.au>

1st International Orchid Conservation Congress

Perth, Western Australia, 24-28 September, 2001.
Information: Dr. Kingsley Dixon, Kings Park & Botanic Garden, West Perth 6005, Western Australia.
E-mail: orchidcongress@kpbw.wa.gov.au

RNZIH DIRECTORY

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Seed Wanted

Peraxilla tetrapetala - scarlet mistletoe or any parasites of beech in return for plant exchange or payment.

Phone 03 366 7774 or 03 348 2658
or contact David Hobbs, P.O. Box 13 632,
Christchurch.

Y2K Tree Planting Reveals Pacific Rim Focus

Penny Cliffin

(Reproduced from the Auckland Branch Newsletter, September 2000)

Institute members and friends in association with Auckland City parks staff planted three members of the genus *Agathis* in the Domain in August. The planting was part of the Institute's commemoration of the year 2000. An interpretative plaque was unveiled by Dr. Joan Dingley, representing the Institute's Associates of Honour.

The value which today's society places on the indigenous flora of New Zealand and the surrounding Pacific Rim countries is reflected in this tree planting. Strategic documents adopted by territorial authorities around Auckland also show this emphasis. In line with Auckland City's draft *City Tree Policy*, this tree planting can be seen to "celebrate the unique identity of Auckland" and to exemplify Auckland as an "Outstanding City of the South Pacific." This approach supports the plant collections concept of establishing and curating collections of plants representing entire or part genera.

A recent research study on the diversity and management of tree collections in the Auckland area found that although there is wide representation of a range of native trees, at present there are few genera well represented for which there are relatives around other parts of the Pacific Rim.

The three trees planted were from some 13 species in the *Agathis* genus in the family araucariaceae. *Agathis* species can be found in Australia, the Malay Archipelago, Fiji, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia and New Zealand. *Agathis* is from the Greek, a ball of fire, alluding to the almost globular cone (Fisher, 1975). They are generally large and valuable timber trees.

The three trees planted were:

<i>Agathis australis</i>	New Zealand kauri
<i>Agathis lanceolata</i>	New Caledonian kauri
<i>Agathis robusta</i>	Queensland kauri

References:

Auckland City 1999. City tree Plan. Strategy Document. Auckland City.
Fisher, M.E.; Satchell, E.; Watkins, J.M. 1975.

Gardening with New Zealand plants, shrubs and trees. Collins, Auckland
Kauri Management Unit, New Zealand Forest Service 1983. Kauri forest management. New Zealand Forest Service.

According to *RHS Dictionary of Gardening* and the *New York Encyclopedia of Horticulture*, there are 20 species in the genus *Agathis* and they are generally known as Dammar-pines. They are closely related to *Araucaria* but are distinguished by their seeds being free and not united with the cone scales. They require tropical, subtropical or "at least warm-temperate conditions". The leaves are flat and broader than those of araucarias and are remarkably long lived. It is claimed the leaves sometimes last as long as twenty years. I knew that the leaves of exceptional plants such as *Welwitschia* could last an incredibly long time but had never even considered that kauri leaves might well be twenty years old. This could make a fascinating little research project.

Agathis australis, our kauri, is the southernmost of the genus.

Agathis lanceolata has wider leaves than do other members of the genus (8-16mm). It also eventually forms a very impressive tree more than 40m in height.

Agathis robusta, as its common name suggests, comes from Queensland. It can reach a height of about 45m with a trunk up to 3m in diameter. There are some very fine examples of this species in Epsom.

It is always interesting to see how overseas garden guides describe New Zealand plants. The *RHS Dictionary* says that young plants of *Agathis australis* are valued for their tiered growth and new shoots emerging a soft tone of bronze before developing a conspicuous bloom. The *New York Encyclopedia*, usually reliable, says "the New Zealand kauri-pine is less satisfactory because as a young plant it has a poor habit of growth and sparse foliage". Which do you believe?

Dig up Those Grand Herbaceous Borders

Nick Nuttall

The Victorian park, with its formal flower beds and manicured lawns, should be swept aside in favour of naturalistic German-style parks that are cheaper to maintain, a British researcher said yesterday.

Dr. Nigel Dunnett, a lecturer in landscape ecology at Sheffield University, said many councils could no longer afford the traditional herbaceous borders, with their need to be regularly planted, dug up, and then replanted.

Instead parklands should be turned into wildflower meadows and coppiced woodlands, which could often be maintained by simply cutting the grass, and the grazing of animals there once a year.

“The inspiration [for these naturalistic parks] has come from Germany and countries like The Netherlands,” Dr. Dunnett told the British Association. Gardens that had been planted in Munich and Stuttgart were beacons of good practice, he said.

Traditionally gardening skills had already been lost by many cash-strapped local authorities and many once-grand Victorian parks and their gardens had already become run-down or “dumbed down”, he said. Many parks were barren, monotonous wastelands of heavily mown grass which were devoid of colour. He said few councils could afford formal beds, except in the most prestigious of sites, while the cost of maintaining and replanting such Victorian-style seasonal beds could be as high as £15 a square yard, he said. But the wildflower meadow approach could cost as little as 20p a square yard, he said.

Careful selection of the flowers used for planting and wild-flowers and grasses sown, could provide near year-round colour, which was popular with many people, he said. Dr. Dunnett has been testing the new layouts at several places in Sheffield, with support from the local council, including Concorde and Bole Hills parks.

He said Gloucester city council, Crystal Palace in southeast London, and the Millennium Eden project in Cornwall, had all used Continental-style designs in their gardens.

Dr. Dunnett said a basic mix of flowers, including cornflowers and poppies, had been developed to create the parkland meadows. He said: “We add things to it, such as North American plants [including a yellow prairie plant, tick seed, and the pink-coloured Mexican cosmos plant] which flower later, so you get colour into October”. These new more naturalistic parkland layouts could also incorporate perennial plants to complement the sown wild flowers.

Varieties and species favoured by supporters of the German garden movement include rudeckia or the corn flower, day lilies, red hot pokers and the continental grass miscanthus.

He said these more naturalistic layouts were popular with birds because they produced considerable amounts of seed. Children and adults also enjoyed walking through them and picking the flowers, an activity that would be frowned upon in the Victorian-style parks.

His ideas have surprised some heritage campaigners.

Richard Holder, senior architectural adviser at the Victorian Society, said: “I do not think we could support this at all and can see no reason for doing it.”

“If you have a good Victorian park, it is worth keeping it. Indeed we should be spending more money to get them back to what they should look like.”

From The Times, 9 September 2000

There's Gold Under the Rust

Yvonne Thomas

An old manual lawn mower – the kind of cast-iron backbreaker you might cheerfully swap for a new, powered machine – was auctioned for £450 this summer at Sotheby's. Made in 1857 by James Ferrabee & Co. in its Stroud foundry, it is now considered a desirable antique.

The auctioneers knew they could get a good price for it because lawn mowers have become collectable. Some enthusiasts among the 270 members of the Old Lawnmower Club have 500 of them.

Keith Wootton, the chairman of the club, who has "only" 40, says collectors are interested in anything from a Victorian lawn mower made of cast iron (Edwin Budding invented the first in 1830) right through to 1950s models. He says many gardeners kept their old pusher models just in case the new ones broke down. You'll often see them going for £40 to £50 in car boot sales, and they are worth twice that if cleaned up.

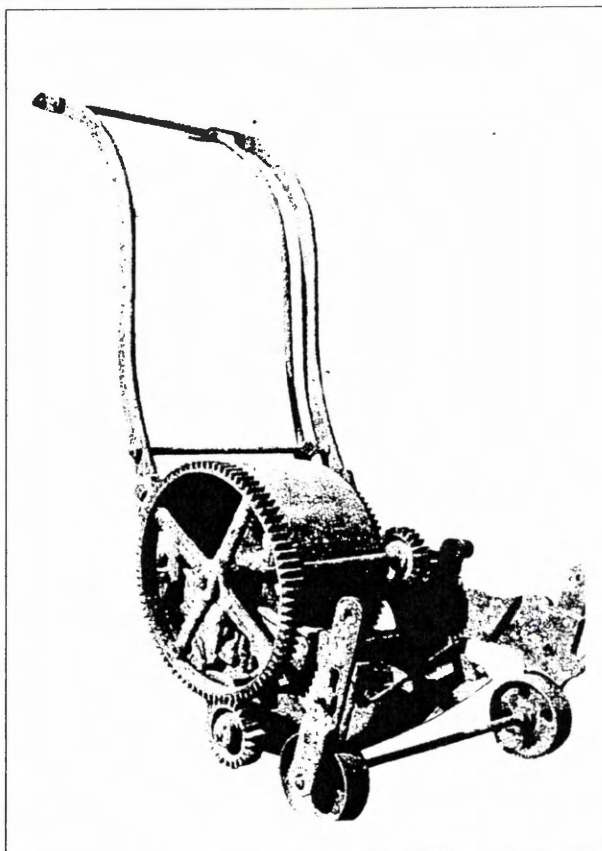
And it's not just mowers: trowels, old spades with hardwood handles smooth with age, forks, secateurs, French watering cans and wooden wheelbarrows are all on the collectable list. They have the feel of long use, some forged by a local blacksmith, the gardener's initials burned into the handle, or made in the Midlands with strong names like "Neverbend" and "Wontbuckle".

Connoisseurs keep an eye open for certain makes. In the case of lawn mowers, Wootton says to look out for three main manufacturers: Ransome's (originally Ransome Sims and Jefferies of Ipswich), Alexander Shanks and Thomas Green and Son of Leeds and London. The early power-driven machines are also sought after, specially anything steam-drive.

Baileys Home and Garden centre in Ross-on-Wye has a Ransome's "Lion" lawn mower for £85, and you can see examples of early mowers by other

manufacturers at the Garden Museum in Lambeth, South London.

Alistair Morris, a director of Sotheby's, quotes a Parkes advertisement in his book *Antiques from the Garden*: "These Forks and Tools are now In use by upwards of 1,000 of the Nobility and Farmer members of the Royal Agricultural Society who pronounce them to be the best ever invented and to facilitate labour by at least 20 per cent".



A rare Ferrabee lawn mower

The "Nobility" and "Ladies" often feature in gardening adverts up to the Second World War, and small, light forks and spades from that era made for women and children are now in special demand.

Mark Bailey, who with his wife collects and sells old tools, has a solid-looking workaday spade with a D-shape handle for £55, two with T-shaped handles at £45 each and old trowels with metal burnished and wood handles beeswaxed for £12 to £13 each.

You can pick up a mid-century garden tool for about the same amount as a new one – customers buy them for use, not just display, says Bailey, because they enjoy the feel

of them.

Watering cans, from early earthenware pots to 19th-century French cans of copper and tin painted with brass roses, are decorative enough to attract designers rather than workaday gardeners.

Cans from before 1850 made of copper and brass are the most sought after, selling for a few hundred pounds upwards, says Morris. An English manufacturer to look out for is Haws, a big name in watering cans and collectable to the mid-20th century.

So check now: there may be a treasure lying behind the dusty garden hose at the back of the garage.

From The Times Weekend, September 2000,



R.N.Z.I.H. Awards 2000

Fellow (FRIH)

Awarded to members who have made a significant contribution to horticulture and the Institute.

Colin Charles Bradshaw - Auckland

Colin has extensive hands-on experience with plants and his interest and knowledge is willingly shared with others, especially students. A member of the Auckland Branch Committee, RNZIH, he is the RNZIH delegate to the Auckland Horticultural Council and takes a full part in their activities in its wider role in the community.

He has a special interest in sourcing historical aspects of plant work in the Auckland Domain which has a long history as a premier Auckland Park.

Colin Bradshaw is a worthy recipient of Fellow of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.

Peter Skellerup Plant Conservation Scholarship

The Scholarship will be granted for research field work, publication, propagation, protection and/or cultivation of plants, production of educational resources, and any other activity likely to promote and assist the conservation of New Zealand's indigenous and exotic plant genetic resources.

Dr. John Clemens - Palmerston North

Project:

Kaka beak (*Clianthus puniceus*) is an endangered species with a diminishing occurrence in the wild. It is now believed to occur only between East Cape and in national park land close to Lake Waikaremoana, and in Northland. Several of these sites bear only one plant. At the same time, kaka beak is a familiar garden favourite, with a few named cultivars available as well as seedling plants. However, we do not know how well plants in cultivation are representative of wild kaka beak populations, and more crucially, we have no measure of the genetic diversity of this endangered species in the wild. Therefore, the aim of the project is to provide this information so that it will be possible

to conserve kaka beak more effectively in the wild and in cultivation. The activity will promote an understanding of conservation through feedback to DoC staff, to the wider scientific community, and to the public, for whom *Clianthus puniceus* is an important garden plant.

Objectives:

It is intended to use a reliable DNA fingerprinting technique (RAPD or "rapids") to answer the questions:

- 1 How much do the populations at Urewera National Park (Lake Waikaremoana lake-edge and shrublands), East Coast lowlands and Kaipara Harbour differ within and between themselves?
2. How much is diversity lower than the total number of plants because of clonal layering in the wild?
3. How great is genetic diversity in kaka beak plants in cultivation compared to that in the wild?

Plant Raisers' Award – Vireya Solar Flare

The Award is granted to any nominated individual or organisation who has raised in New Zealand a cultivar considered to be sufficiently meritorious.

David Brown - Tauranga

Solar Flare has the advantages of hybrid vigour giving it strength, making it easy to grow in the garden situation. Solar Flare's main merit is the introduction of foliage colour to the Vireya group, combined with a free branching, vigorous habit, giving a uniform shape. Its clear, vivid pink flowers and carnation scent give it a full compliment of features, i.e. flowers, fragrance, foliage and form.

Plant Collections In New Zealand

Maria Adamski

No one can argue the benefits of plants for their food, shelter, environmental and amenity values. An essential part of a complex ecosystem we depend on plants for our life. Considering our distance and isolation from the rest of the world, for the major part of our history, New Zealand is a mecca of native and exotic flora. We have a large number of outstanding New Zealanders to thank for this. But do we know what we really have? Dr. K. Hammett states:

It is important to know not only which plants are in the country but where they are located and how vulnerable specific taxa might be to loss. This is especially so for introduced plants and for specific cultivars since the source of such germ plasm, both wild and cultivated is

being rapidly eroded in some areas and is being made unavailable from others (1993, p. 18).

Hammett goes on to explain the many benefits of a plant register to a range of people.

There have been a number of attempts over the last 30 years to try and bring together this information. The most notable is in the area of trees, maybe because they are easier to record being that they are more permanent. Here I will attempt to condense the sources of information on plant collections in New Zealand that I can think of or have come across in the format of a timeline. Readers may be able to dispute or add to this list, in which case it would be great to hear from you.

SOURCE	INFORMATION
Botanic Gardens, Arboretums	All Botanic Gardens and Arboretums would have some sort of records started at some time. Minutes of domains boards or council meetings, old records and older or past staff members are sources of information
Universities	Extensive tree collections e.g. Canterbury University
Flora of New Zealand	New Zealand flora and naturalised flora in five volumes from 1961 to 2000.
S.W. Burstall	1970 – 1974 Cited by K. Hammett (1993). Unpublished reports as “Historic and Notable Trees of New Zealand” Condensed as “Great Trees of New Zealand” S.W. Burstall and E.V. Sale (1984)
Marion MacKay	“A survey and evaluation of the distribution of selected exotic tree genera in private collections in New Zealand” (1990)
RMA	1991 The introduction of this act has ensured notable trees are recognised within each city or district council in their city and district plans. Usually located under the heritage section of these plans
Herb Federation	Individual plant collections held by members of the Herb Federation of New Zealand is updated and published every two year
Plant collections register	Update No. 3: 1 st March 1993 by Dr Keith Hammett. Contains a list of generic and theme collections in New Zealand.
Auckland plant collections network	Started in 1995 with the conservation of native plants with the objective of extending to exotics.
New Zealand Plant Finder	By Meg Gaddum, 1997. Lists genera and species and the nurseries they are available from.
MAF Bio Security Authority	Plants bio security index for importing seed for sowing. An incomplete record of what is currently in New Zealand.
Marion MacKay	Data Base of trees in New Zealand soon to be released on the web.

As we can see there are many private and public sources of information that are scattered needing to be cross-referenced and managed.

The climate in New Zealand allows us to grow a wide range of plants from the tropical in the north through to temperate and then arctic in the south. Combined with land as a scarce resource this suggests we should have a better knowledge and management of our current plant collections. A co-ordinated network with a buy in from many of the above listed sources would be a move towards achieving the conservation of native and exotic plants. Dr. D. Given (1994) cites three objectives for a national network. In summary they are:

1. To co-ordinate policies between gardens, encouraging the exchange of plants and expertise, and discouraging duplication. (Exactly how many collections of *Rhododendron* do we need in New Zealand?)
2. To co-ordinate these policies with national conservation organizations and other scientific and commercial bodies.
3. To co-ordinate with international groups and organizations.

With technology today the ability to do this should be as easy as ABC so why is it not occurring?

References:

Given, D. (1994). *Principles and Practice of Plant Conservation*. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press.

Hammett, K. (1993). New Zealand Plant Collection Register Update No. 3: 1st March 1993. *Horticulture in New Zealand*, 4(1), 18-28.

Congratulations

Our congratulations go to Dr. Ross Ferguson, FRIH, Auckland Branch Executive member who has been made a fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Fellowships are conferred on scientists, research engineers, technologists for distinction in research and the advancement of science and technology.

FERGUSON, Allan Ross

Senior Scientists, HortResearch, Auckland

Internationally recognised for his fundamental research into the botany and physiology of the genus *Actinidia* (Kiwifruit). His key areas of contribution have been related to describing the taxonomy of the genus and using detailed information from that work and the related understanding of ploidy to enhance opportunities within the HortResearch kiwifruit breeding programme that is now releasing cultivars (such as Zespri Gold) of considerable commercial benefit to the New Zealand industry. He has also made significant contributions to knowledge of the nutritional value of kiwifruit (especially the significance of ascorbic acid) to the New Zealand diet and has defined some of the mineral nutrition requirements for this crop.

APOLOGIES

Our sincere apologies to Mr. Peter Skellerup. CBE, AHRIH, whose name we omitted from the list of Associates of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture, in the last Newsletter.

Newsletter



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