

Newsletter



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Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (Inc.)

Chairman's Comments

So far this year has seen plenty of progress in the Institutes' affairs and it looks likely to continue. Here's a brief update on the main areas of activity.

Tauranga in October

A one to two day get-together in the Tauranga area incorporating visits to gardens and places of natural interest, AGM and Banks Memorial Lecture is being organised. Dates are yet to be finalised but 1-2 October looks most likely, so pencil it in your diaries now. Last year we had a great turnout in Hamilton so let's do the same for Tauranga.

New Zealand Gardens Trust

NZGT continues to grow and this was most evident at their recent conference held at Larnach Castle, Dunedin in early May. More than 75 enthusiastic garden owners and delegates met for a series of talks, lectures and garden visits on the business of successfully opening gardens to the public and achieving excellence. The theme for the conference was "Going For Gold" with the aim of encouraging open garden owners to exploit increased interest from overseas garden visitors following the 2004 Chelsea Flower Show gold award winning New Zealand garden. You'll be able to read several of the lectures presented at the conference in forthcoming issues of the *New Zealand Garden Journal*. There are now 133 gardens registered with the trust, 97 from the North Island, the rest on the "mainland". The ratio

of private gardens to public gardens is roughly two to one. Large gardens (over 5 hectares) make up around 40% of the total, medium gardens (0.5-5 hectares) 20%, small gardens (less than 0.5 hectares) 40%. For more information of the workings of NZGT, a comprehensive listing of all the participating gardens and the results of their assessments check out the NZGT website www.gardens.org.nz or follow the links from www.rnzih.org.nz. Or contact Linda at our Lincoln office by post or email, see over page for details. Applications for the spring 2005 round of garden assessments close on 30th June, details and application forms are available on the NZGT website.

RNZIH Education Trust

Among his other duties National Training Manager, David Pufflett, has been busy organising this year's round of oral and practical exams. On 7 July there will be an exam in Hastings for those in the fruit sector, 14 July one in Hamilton for the amenity sector and 11 August in Auckland one for nursery sector candidates. For more information contact David on 09 236 3043 or email rnzih@ps.gen.nz.

Another highlight of this year for the Education Trust is the forthcoming HortFert Young Horticulturist of the Year competition. In conjunction with the NZ Horticultural Training Organisation, the RNZIH Education Trust is organising this national competition to acknowledge and inspire young people employed in the

horticultural industry. Support has been sought from industry groups as well as sponsorship from commercial organisations and the concept has been well received. To date the NZ Arboricultural Association, Nursery and Garden Industry, Landscape Association of NZ, NZ Recreation Association, NZ Fruitgrowers Federation are all participating, running sector competitions to select candidates for the finals which are to be held on Friday 18 November in conjunction with the Ellerslie Flower Show in Auckland. Sponsors for the event include HortFert, Massey University, Ravensdown Fertiliser, NuFarm, Manukau Institute of Technology, Faber Glasshouses, Veg-gro Supplies, Touchwood Books, NZ Safety, Toshiba and the Ellerslie Flower Show. The trust is employing Elenka Nikoloff to manage this event. Candidates for the competition must under 30 years of age by the end of December 2005, working full time in one of the listed sectors, and able to show evidence of five years practical experience in the horticultural industry. To find out more contact one of the above industry groups or Elenka on 09 636 5922 or email elenka.nikoloff@xtra.co.nz. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors for their generosity and support for this worthwhile project.

Another 'Thank you'

NZ Gardens Trust, the Education Trust, the Oral and Practical exams, the other workings of RNZIH such as Notable Trees NZ, the websites, finances, etc all rely very heavily on voluntary input from members of RNZIH executive, non-executive members, industry sector representatives and friends. Thank you one and all.

Andrew Maloy
Chair RNZIH Executive Committee

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Gunnera tinctoria * Chilean rhubarb

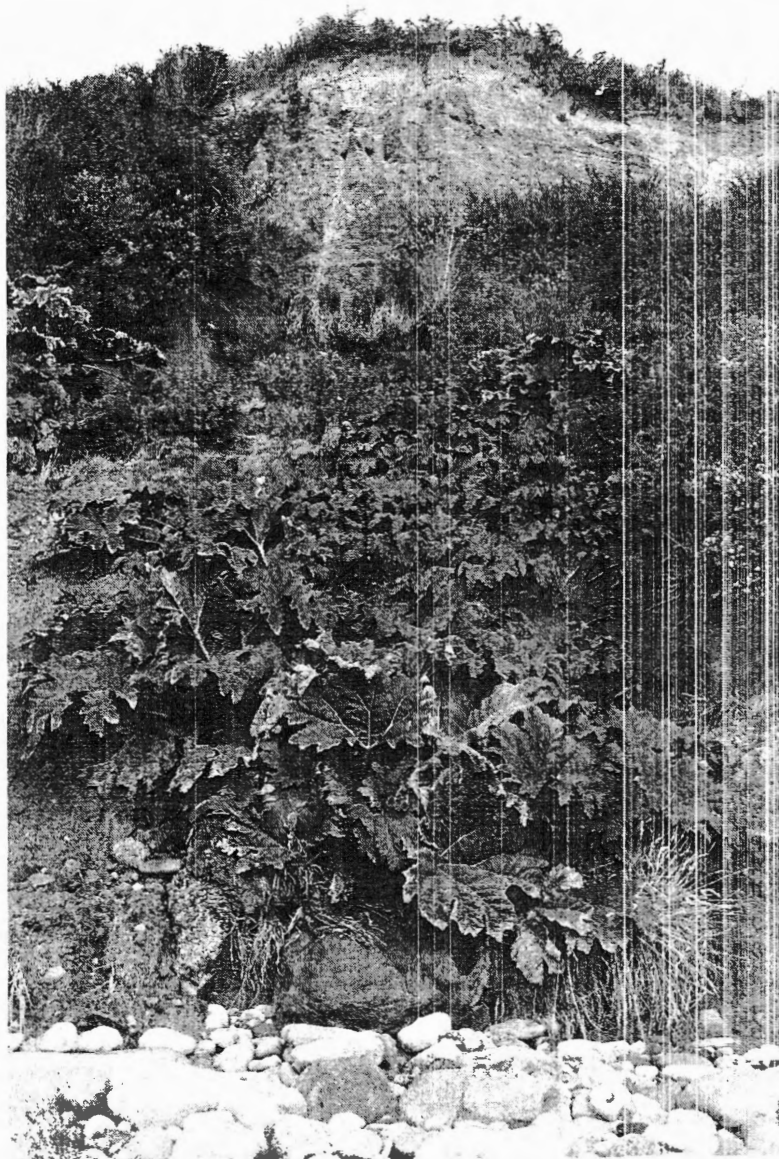
Gunnera tinctoria is also known as the Chilean or giant rhubarb because the leaves resemble huge rhubarb, although the plants are unrelated. This South American species was a favourite architectural plant for Kiwi gardeners, and has often been grown alongside feature ponds with its gigantic leaves and dramatic form. However, many gardeners still do not realise that Chilean rhubarb is listed on the National Pest Plant Accord, which means that it is now considered to be a pest and can be harmful to our environment.

It is now illegal to propagate, sell, or distribute this species in New Zealand, and you can be prosecuted for doing so. The news gets worse * strictly speaking plants on the accord list should not even be used in display gardens, either private or public. Although gardeners may feel that they are being deprived of this popular plant, Chilean rhubarb has proven to be quite invasive over the last decade. A single plant can produce up to 250,000 seeds a year, which are readily spread by birds and water. It will also regrow and spread from pieces of rhizome.

The worst infestation is in the North Island, where local authority and Department of Conservation staff are struggling to control it along 40 km of Taranaki sea cliffs. The Taranaki problem

is the subject of an excellent article by Catherine Law (Summer 2003 issue of *Protect*, magazine of the NZ Biosecurity Institute * available online at www.biosecurity.org.nz/files/Giant_problem.pdf). Catherine also mentions that Chilean rhubarb is persisting in areas of Egmont National Park, despite intensive control measures.

While holidaying on the South Island's West Coast over Anzac Weekend, I was dismayed to see hundreds of Chilean rhubarb plants growing on coastal cliffs at Cape Foulwind, near Westport



(see photo). Tom Belton of DOC (West Coast Conservancy) knows this population well, and told me that the Cape Foulwind infestation is one of the worst on the West Coast, and that it occurs in other places as well. I agree with Tom that the full scale of the problem is only just starting to be realised * Chilean rhubarb is on the march. So please do your bit for our country and don't grow it!

Murray Dawson

(A shortened version of this article was printed as a letter to the editor of the Weekend Gardener magazine, Issue 171, 2005)

Dates for your diary

The NZ Plant Conservation Network will be holding its annual conference and AGM in Christchurch from Friday 12th August till Sunday 14th August 2005. Registration forms and further information can be found on their website at <http://www.nzpcn.org.nz>

CONFERENCE

MEANING AND DESIGN OF NATURE FOR THE URBAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Christchurch Art Gallery

24-26 August 2005

The year 2005 has been designated as the Year of the Built Environment. It is an opportunity for New Zealanders to celebrate the buildings, spaces, places and structures in which they live, work and play. For the 87 per cent of us who live in cities and towns, the built environment is an even more familiar and immediate part of our daily lives.

But what do we know about the Built Environment? In this conference we will explore aspects of nature in cities and towns. We will address questions such as: What role does nature play in our lives? How do we incorporate nature in our urban design? How do we manage our built environment for wildlife? Are we maintaining functioning ecosystems? How do we enhance indigenous biodiversity in cities?

Who should attend?

This conference will be of interest to: Ecologists, Landscape Architects, Architects, Engineers, Town/city planners, Academics, Social scientists, Social philosophers, Students, Home gardeners, Greenspace managers, Traffic engineers, Conservationists, Tangata Whenua (urban marae)

Check out the programme, etc at <http://events.lincoln.ac.nz/urban> or for more details contact:

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New Zealand Gardens Trust

Seminar - Larnach Castle Dunedin, 7 & 8 May 2005

For any garden owner wishing to open their garden to visitors this seminar had it all - a heady mix from start to finish. Larnach Castle provided a fantastic venue and Margaret Barker's capable staff were excellent. Being piped into the castle and subsequently into the banquet hall stirred everyone with only the smallest drop of Scottish blood. It snowed - but not enough to deter us from discovering the good taste and exciting plants that Margaret is still building on in her inspiring garden.

The speakers were able commencing with Margaret Barker's telling but humorous account of the making of her garden. Mick Reece told us how important is to achieve a high standard. "If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well."

Graeme Osborne of Auckland Tourism brought all his enthusiasm for this exceptional country with its exceptional people and gardens. He was excited about our success at Chelsea in 2004 and the potential to build on that particular market to visitors to NZ gardens.

Trish Waugh showed us how it was done at Chelsea concentrating on the importance of detail and involving us in the strong spirituality of their Gold exhibit.

The importance of detail also came through in Neil Ross' talk on light, scale and space - a talk that was relished by the gardeners in the audience. Gordon Collier followed with a telling power point presentation on gardens he had seen in the previous six months illustrating what to do and what not to do to achieve a really good garden.

The open forums were useful and fun - everything from what to charge, what to cook

and what to sell. There was great participation from everyone present. Hopefully someone recorded the stories! We should now be better able to greet our visitors and to send them away with 'warm fuzzies.'

Good marketing was handled ably by Sophie Barker stressing the importance of the 'wow' shot that encapsulates your garden with an expressive one liner to go with it. Good stories for the media are a great investment and the photo album still a useful tool.

The participants were fortunate to have the support through out the seminar of Jack Hobbs, President of the RNZIH who shared his experience on more than one occasion. When people of like interests meet and pass on their knowledge and experience, two or three days is scarcely long enough; any more would have produced casualties from over indulgence!

'Assessed' Gardens being renamed 'Registered' Gardens

Gardeners up until now applying to be listed in the category 'Assessed' have frequently expected their garden to be critically assessed as the name mistakenly implied and even a critique provided. Although the assessors were always happy to see the garden, they were there only to check the details provided were correct and to make sure the owners' description of their garden was accurate .

Following the confusion resulting from the naming of this garden category, 'Assessed' the Trust have agreed this be changed to 'Registered' so as to clear up any confusion.

It is hoped that this is a better title for this category of garden.

**Jayson Kelly FRIH
NZGT Chairman**

Update from RNZIH Education Trust

The Education Trust has been up and running for just over a year now and with any new positions it does take time to get systems into place. However during the last year the Trust has made considerable strides in a range of projects in conjunction with the NZ Horticulture Industry Training Organisation.

Young Horticulturist of the Year

The Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture Education Trust in conjunction with the New Zealand Horticulture Industry Training Organisation is organising a national horticulture competition for young horticulturists. The competition is centred on practical and knowledge based skills and will be open to all main sectors of the horticulture industry in New Zealand.

Concept/Profile:

The concept/profile is to create a competition that will generate interest, inspiration and acknowledgment to young horticulturists employed in the horticulture industry. The following statements outline specifically what the competition could achieve.

- A one day event that is competed among young horticulturists to enhance their horticulture ability and acknowledge their skill and knowledge while working in the horticulture industry
- To be used to promote horticulture as a career for persons wishing to enter the horticulture industry
- To lift the profile of the horticulture industry as an exciting and rewarding occupation
- To create a challenging and rewarding competition so that contestants can achieve outcomes beyond their expectations

Sector finals will be held by a range of horticulture industry associations and the national final will be held at the Ellerslie Flower Show on 19 November

Oral and Practical Exams

Last year the RNZIH Education Trust organised the first successful oral and practical exam for those working in the amenity industry in South Auckland.

This year three exams will be held:

Fruit production in Hastings on the 7 July

Amenity Horticulture in Hamilton on the 14 July

Nursery Production in South Auckland on the 11 August

The one day exam will consist of 10 questions. Each question will take on average 30 minutes to answer. The questions will be relevant to day-to-day activities that a 3rd year apprentice would be expected to accomplish in their area of horticultural work. The questions will be selected from a question bank that has been compiled by horticulturists for each sector.

Horticulture Moderation

During 2005 the NZ NZHITO has contracted the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture Education Trust to conduct national moderation of horticulture units that growers, schools, providers, and other ITO's are assessing throughout the year. This national moderation plan will be coordinated by David Puflett, National Training Manager, RNZIH Education Trust along with support from NZHITO staff, and will be based on the existing peer review cluster groups that are operating in the regions. The reason for conducting a moderation system is to ensure that we are all teaching and assessing at the same level. For example a work place assessor assessing planting a tree unit in Timaru is at the same teaching and assessing standard as a polytechnic teaching the same unit in Auckland. Basically it validates that we are all teaching and assessing on a level playing field. Without a national moderation plan there is not much point in having as National Certificate qualifications. There are 35 workshops being held throughout NZ and it is expected that all providers, workplace assessors and school teachers will attend one of the workshops.

Are we facing the world's sixth great extinction?

Over 1,000 scientists and policymakers at an international conference in Paris in January 2005, called for global attention to be given to what some believe could be world's biggest mass extinction in 65 million years. With more than 7,000 animal species and 60,000 plant species threatened, scientists noted there remained enormous ignorance about the planet's species. Of the estimated 10-30 million species on Earth, only around 1.7 million have been identified and described. The vast majority of the unidentified species are organisms that live in the soil and deep oceans. Each year, it is estimated that between 25,000 and 50,000 species die out, the vast majority of which have not even been identified. Some scientists suggest that the current rate of extinction is a thousand times greater than at any other time in the course of humanity's development.

"Biodiversity is a vital and poorly appreciated resource for all of humankind that underpins the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals," the conference said in a statement.

"Biodiversity is being irreversibly destroyed by human activities at an unprecedented rate, and this demands urgent and significant action to conserve, sustainably use and equitably share the benefits of biodiversity."

A foremost US scientist, Edward Wilson, said it would cost about three billion dollars to draw up an inventory of the world's species, and take 25 years to complete it. Saving the 25 most-threatened "hotspots" that abound in species, such as the Amazonian forest, would cost 25 billion dollars, he said.

Further information: www.recherche.gouv.fr/diodiv2005paris/en/

This article first appeared in Cuttings Vol2(2) April 2005 BGCI

Notable Trees NZ

Two Notable Trees are recorded in both the Nelson District Plan Heritage Tree list and on the RNZIH Notable Tree List as registration no. 398. (See website www.notabletrees.org.nz)

These trees are *Sequoiadendron giganteum* and they are situated on Britannia Heights and overlooking Nelson City.

The tree dimensions are:

Height 27m.
Canopy spread 12m.
Circumference @1.4m 4m.

Stem score 252.

Significance Noble Tree 27m.
Historic Association.

Both trees are on a north/south axis line and were planted half a kilometre apart by William Songer. He was a survivor of Captain Arthur Wakefield's party following the tragic Wairau Incident.

The plaque reads:

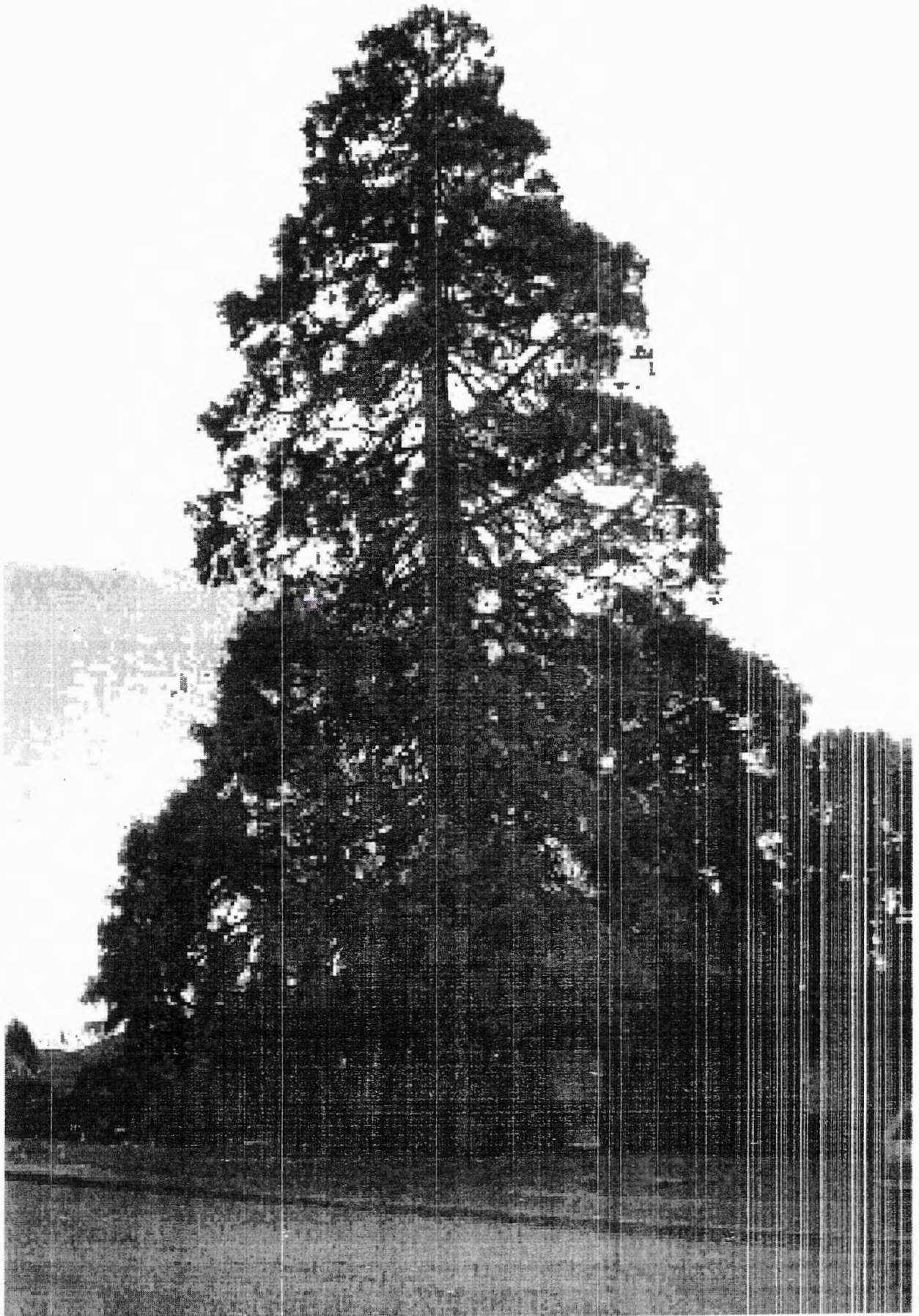
'On this hill Captain Arthur Wakefield raised the Union Jack on 13 December 1841. A signal gun was fired at noon from here every Saturday dating from 11 September 1858 and continued for many years. The Wellingtonias were planted in memory of Captain Wakefield on Arbor Day 20 August 1900'. Notes by Peter Grundy Nelson City Council Arborist 1994.

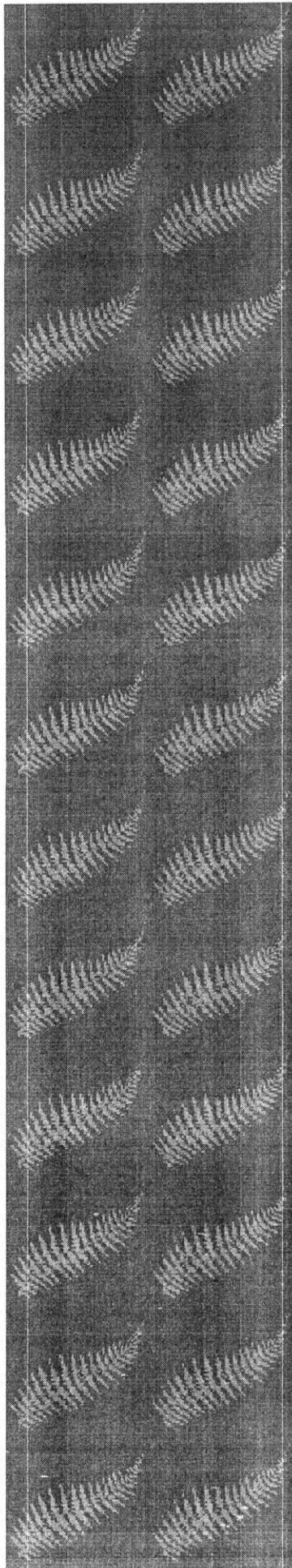
Both trees are labelled with RNZIH plaques. The northern tree is adorned with Christmas lights each year because of its significance and dominant position.

The importance of many of our NZ trees is that they represent much of our history. It is essential that we record this history for our descendants. Anyone can submit a tree to their local authority for inclusion in the local District Plan Heritage Tree list. In this way tree protection is possible. It is the only mechanism available to the public for safeguarding our Notable Trees and much a significant part of our history.

Ron Flook
National Registrar

Note: There have been some difficulties reported in obtaining copies of a Standard Tree Evaluation Method (Flook 1996). These are available from Touchwood Books PO Box 610 Hastings mail@touchwoodbooks.co.nz or from Ron Flook email: flook@netaccess.co.nz





New horticultural resources on the RNZIH website

The RNZIH Webmaster, Murray Dawson, has been busy behind the scenes adding new content to our website. Many of these resources are, or will soon be, accessible from our main horticulture page at www.rnzih.org.nz/pages/horticulture.html.

Image galleries of New Zealand plants

This section is currently undergoing a complete redevelopment and is being enlarged to accommodate more than 2,500 images.

To provide a New Zealand theme, these images will initially focus on native plants, and are being arranged by collection. We gratefully acknowledge the following contributors who have made their collections available for digitisation:

- The Hebe Society (UK)
- The Weekend Gardener / Linea-Verde Photography
- Tony Foster (Northland)
- Jack Hobbs (Auckland)
- Mark Dean (Naturally Native Plants, Tauranga)
- John Liddle (Liddle Wonder, Waikanae)
- Roy Edwards (Lincoln)
- Paul Ashford (Dunedin).

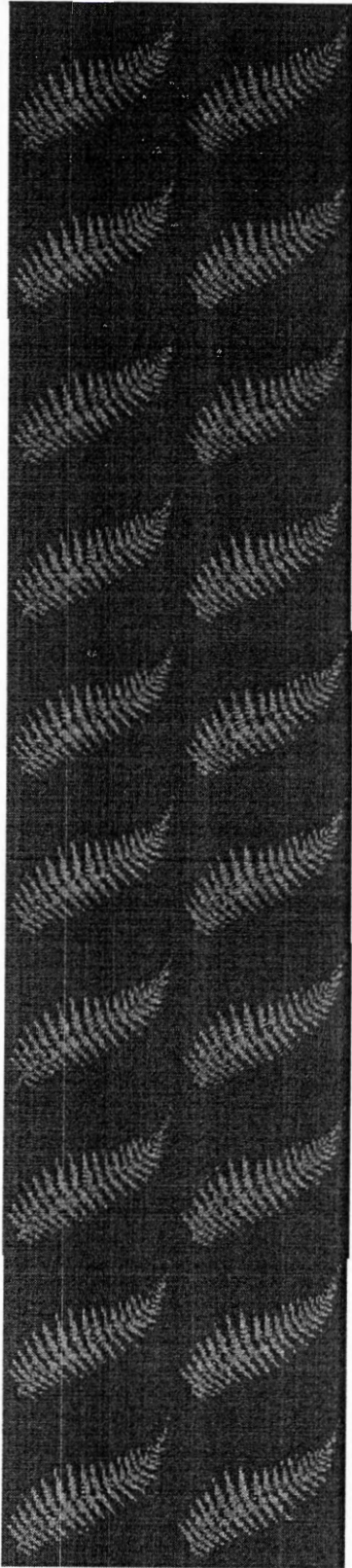
Some of these collections are outstanding, for example Martin Boettel from Linea-Verde is a professional photographer, and has provided a truly beautiful collection of native and exotic plant images that have been published on the inside back cover of the Weekend Gardener magazine.

When implemented, these collections will provide a central, image-driven resource for all those interested in New Zealand plants.

Please contact the Webmaster if you wish to contribute images from your photo, slide, or digital collection to this worthwhile project.

NZOOM content

In February 2004, TVNZ kindly granted the RNZIH permission to reproduce Home and Garden content from their former website, NZOOM. This site was abandoned in mid-2003 due to TVNZ returning to their core business and building a more television-oriented website.



This major horticultural and gardening resource of nearly 1000 web pages would have been lost without the RNZIH's involvement. The time-consuming task of reformatting and uploading garden articles, plant profiles, and other information from the former NZOOM Home and Garden content continues.

Weekend Gardener content

The RNZIH have recently been developing closer ties with the fortnightly magazine the Weekend Gardener. Rob Lahood, publisher, has generously granted us permission to develop the content from his magazine into an Internet resource through the RNZIH website.

For example, thanks to this additional and ongoing content, the Book Reviews section of the RNZIH website has now been expanded to more than 200 reviews.

In the future, the RNZIH Plant Doctor Archive (NZOOM sourced) will be combined with the ongoing Plant Doctor series from the Weekend Gardener to provide a unique online resource providing answers to gardening questions. Andrew Maloy is Chairman of the RNZIH as well as the writer for the Weekend Gardener Plant Doctor, strengthening the relationship between our organisations.

RNZIH website – a comprehensive resource

Because the RNZIH is an umbrella, non-commercial organisation that fosters and encourages all aspects of horticulture, we are in a unique position to include information from many sources. Outside resources are included with permission and the original sources are always fully acknowledged.

Ongoing development of popular content, in combination with more technical information such as RNZIH conference proceedings and journal articles have broadened our website into a comprehensive resource of that attracts a world-wide audience, including botanists, horticulturists, students and keen gardeners.

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