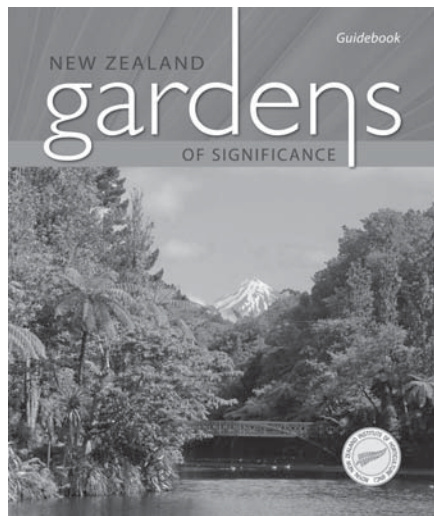


New Zealand Gardens of Significance: Guidebook

Edited by Gordon Collier
Booklet, 64 pages, New Zealand, 2007
\$NZ12.00

Book launch, NZGT conference "Southern Splendour", 4-6 May 2007



It is with considerable pride that I launch this excellent book on behalf of the New Zealand Gardens Trust; it represents the work of many talented people – the gardeners themselves and not least those involved in its production. While this book doesn't pretend to be in the same league as Audrey Eagle's recently released monumental tomes – *Eagle's Complete Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand*, it fills a gap in our garden literature that is long overdue. It is not a picture book but it will be of particular value to people from overseas wanting to visit our gardens and provide short cuts for the domestic garden visitor as well. This garden guide will also be a benchmark as for the first time gardens have been

assessed and are in this book on merit – not because they have paid to be included. The top ranking gardens, the Gardens of National Significance, are represented by a full page while Gardens of Regional Significance share a page with one other. Visitors can expect to have a quality experience but should be aware that the gardens are assessed on one day only and it is up to the owners to keep their property at the same high standard.

This production by the New Zealand Gardens Trust has been several years in the hatching. From the Trust's inception four years ago under Chairman Jayson Kelly, it was an aim to produce something along these lines; those early years were very full and somehow the time was not right. That we are now about to give birth to this long awaited baby, if I can use that metaphor, can be credited in the first instance, to one person, Avelyn Davidson. Avelyn is CEO of Weldon Owen Education, an American publishing company that turns out in the region of 60 titles every year. One morning about three years ago when interviewing her for an article I was writing for *New Zealand House & Garden* magazine, the topic the Trustees had in mind came up. She at once volunteered to publish for us at a reduced rate, an offer immediately accepted! I should tell you her own garden in Acacia Bay high above Lake Taupo is wonderful with breath taking views – we should send out another envoy!

No project of this kind is ever as simple as it might seem as Trustee Margaret Barker and Executive Officer Liz Morrow will testify. The

text was already largely on the website (<http://www.gardens.org.nz/>) but Liz had to check that this and the entries were correct – and if they aren't it is not her fault, and attend to all the other details that surfaced. Margaret with her recent book publishing experience provided the liaison with everyone concerned and travelled to Auckland to meet with the designer – Emma Alsweller and generally made things tick.

That we are able to publish at such a modest price is excellent, a huge thank you to Avelyn Davidson. Thank you also to Emma for her fine design work. Details about distribution and costs are a separate issue but it is the trustees hope that this milestone will provide useful information, give further impetus to their work and hopefully lead to a revised edition in due course.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to formally launch *New Zealand Gardens of Significance: Guidebook*. Congratulations to all the gardeners on their achievement, thanks to all those who helped put it together and to the publishers for bringing this to fulfilment.

Gordon Collier, Trustee and Garden Assessor, New Zealand Gardens Trust.

Available from Touchwood Books

(<http://touchwoodbooks.co.nz/>)

Book review archive

Our entire archive of book reviews (from the *Journal of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture* 1981, under its various names), together with book reviews from the *Weekend Gardener* magazine (from Issue 86, November 2001) are now available on our website at www.rnzih.org.nz.