

Book Reviews

A path through the trees: Mary Sutherland – forester, botanist & women's advocate

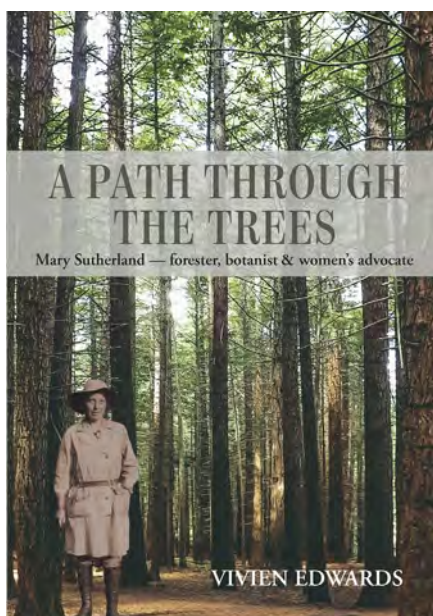
By Vivien Edwards

Published by Writes Hill Press,
November 2020

Printed by YourBooks, New Zealand
Paperback, 201 pages, black & white
illustrations, 250 × 175 mm
ISBN 978-0-9941494-4-2
\$NZ45.00

Available from the publisher ([www.
bookpublishing.co.nz](http://www.bookpublishing.co.nz)) or enquire at all
good independent bookshops.

Reviewed by Elizabeth Miller,
National Forestry Herbarium, Scion.



Mary Sutherland (1893–1955) was the first woman in the world to graduate with a degree in forestry and to make a career in forestry and in using trees in landscapes. This biography follows her life during five decades in the first half of the 20th century that were influenced by the social and economic upheaval of two world wars and two economic depressions. These caused disruption and dictated changes in direction for her employment but broadened her experience and her areas of influence. Mary was a pioneer of women choosing to follow a career that was usually a male domain.

The author, Vivien Edwards, from the Bay of Plenty, is a researcher and writer, familiar with forestry from contributing to the former

New Zealand Forest Industries Magazine. She came across a plaque commemorating Mary Sutherland's life and work, sited beside a track through the redwoods on the edge of the Whakarewarewa Forest at Rotorua. Vivien was intrigued and began a decade-long investigation to find more about Mary and what it was like for a woman working in the State Forest Service from 1923 to 1933, and her subsequent life. This is the author's third book¹.



The book begins with a Foreword by Andrew McEwen ONZM, FNZIF, Chair of the NZ Institute of Forestry Foundation and NZIF President 2008–2014. The NZIF supported publication of the book. The publishers also thank the Stout Trust for publication support. An Introduction, eight Chapters covering sequential phases of Mary's life, and a Postscript, are followed by Acknowledgements, credits of Photos and Illustrations, a Plant Glossary giving botanical names of the common plant names used in the text, Endnotes listing all references, and a Bibliography of all the published and unpublished sources of information accessed by the author.

Many photos from a range of official and family sources add greatly to this enjoyable book that takes the reader through records and incidents which give a flavour of Mary's life at different stages.

It is set in the context of Britain and then New Zealand, opening a window into government institutions and practices of the time, and the strong influence of individuals managing regional sections in a widely dispersed organisation such as the New Zealand State Forest Service. Mary, at times, needed to navigate around strained relationships between professional and practically-trained foresters, and through power struggles between local conservancies and Head Office of the State Forest Service in Wellington. Tensions could exist associated with professional women working in a male-dominated profession, especially one that involved fieldwork. Mary had a 'pleasant temperament' and seems to have been able to ride-out difficult situations.

Apart from her paid work, Mary was always an advocate for women's causes, especially access to higher education. She was, from early days in New Zealand, an active member of the New Zealand Federation of University Women, serving a term on the executive. She was an inaugural and active member of the NZ Institute of Forestry after its formation in 1927. She enjoyed educational opportunities, contributing to a 'Forestry in Schools' programme, and later, creating many displays during her years at the Dominion Museum.

The book conveys a vivid picture of life of a professional woman who chose to work in the field of forestry, and who, when situations changed beyond her control, chose other work where she could apply her increasing experience and expertise.

The first chapter, 'Forestry in Britain', briefly covers her childhood, studies at the University of North Wales (now Bangor University), graduation with a degree in forestry in 1916, then raising seedlings in forestry nurseries, supervising a team from the Women's Land Army, working on forested estates and taking part in England's statistical forest survey, developing analytical skills.

A report on the economic situation in Britain in 1922 recommended that afforestation cease, and Mary,

¹ Vivien Edwards' other titles are: *Winkelmann: Images of early New Zealand* (Benton Ross, 1987) and *Battling the Big B: Hepatitis B in New Zealand* (Dunmore Publishing, 2007).

together with other skilled foresters, lost her job, but she already had a wide range of experience when she applied to emigrate to New Zealand to work in the recently established New Zealand State Forest Service.

The next three chapters follow her career in the New Zealand State Forest Service, as a forest assistant (never raised to a professional status), carrying out nursery and plantation surveys, reporting on innovative machinery, and other nursery practices that were designed to help make the Forest Service become more cost effective. This work was part of the endeavour to incorporate science into forestry management in New Zealand and made good use of her skills and previous experience. Her work involved writing many reports for Head Office and the local Conservancies.

Mary enjoyed working with children, encouraging children's interest in growing trees through local planting projects, especially through schools. She studied the value of shelter belts to improve agricultural efficiency and encouraged forestry on farms.

She attended the inaugural meeting of a national professional body, the New Zealand Institute of Foresters, formed in April 1927. A few years later she was persuaded to submit her suggestion for the native flora design to incorporate in the official seal of the NZIF. Her sketch of fruiting rimu against a background of mountains appealed to those making the selection and was approved at the NZIF AGM in May 1931. The design is still included today in the NZIF emblem.



NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE
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Te Pūtahi Ngāherehere o Aotearoa Inc.

A new Director of the State Forest Service caused her Rotorua-based research to be wound up. She moved to Head Office in Wellington and used facilities at Victoria University College to prepare microscopic sections and photomicrographs of pine needles of hard-to-identify species, which in 1934 resulted in a publication on their identification. She carried out a sample plot review, travelling back roads throughout the country in her Austin 10. She also sometimes travelled on horseback with a guide in remote areas –

certainly, an intrepid field worker. Recommendations from the survey included ceasing some trials where their placement was impractical or where there was insufficient data, and that measuring methods should be standardised. By 1930, despite organisational difficulties, Mary had earned considerable respect from many colleagues.

In 1932 the National Expenditure Commission recommended that afforestation cease. The number of professional staff at the State Forest Service was reduced, and Mary again lost her job. She had contributed to coordinating a range of forestry programmes and helped build New Zealand's knowledge of plantation forestry, yet she was never promoted above the role of forest assistant!

Chapters 5 and 6 outline Mary's contribution at the Dominion Museum, community connections, and war-time work. Mary stepped into the role of Museum botanist, when the previous botanist moved away, although, in a familiar pattern, Mary's position remained classified as clerical. She helped incorporate Leonard Cockayne's herbarium specimens into the Museum, and because of failing eyesight, Leonard dictated his last published paper to Mary. Another highlight was mounting and classifying the Banks & Solander collections that had arrived at the Museum some years earlier. She oversaw the Botany Department's move to a new building, mounted and classified specimens and created displays, particularly relating to economic botany. It was an era of models and displays for the public. She suffered a bout of ill health and was on leave for almost three years, before returning to the Museum.

In June 1942 the Museum building was taken over for defence purposes, collections were shifted and some irretrievably damaged, which must have been very disappointing. The building was closed to the public for several years, but some work continued behind closed doors, answering public queries, and assisting botanists.

Being mostly in Wellington, Mary took the opportunity to participate in organisations including the Botanical Section of the Wellington Philosophical Society, later a branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand, and was on the NZ Foresters' Council

1935–1936. She was Vice-President of the NZ Institute of Forestry, chairing the AGM in 1941. She joined the Wellington Branch of the NZ Federation of University Women in 1932, and took an active part, especially in supporting welfare and interests of women students.

Early in 1943 Mary left the Museum to undertake National Service, managing a women's hostel at Woburn, Lower Hutt, administered by the YWCA, for workers in the nearby munitions factory. Mary was now 50 years old. She was caring and community-minded, and her previous administrative and supervisory experience stood her in good stead. She was later remembered for her abilities to objectively review all manner of difficult situations without letting personalities obscure her judgement. She held this position for three and a half years, until the hostel was no longer required.

Instead of returning to the Museum, Mary accepted a position with the Department of Agriculture, as a farm advisor, a role that fitted well with her forestry experience, and she enjoyed travelling through the country meeting with farmers. Mary initiated an Extension Service for farm shelter, tree plantations and woodlots, and wrote for the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*. Her articles on "Planting round the homestead", "A working plan for homestead shelter", "Rapid shelter from minor species of trees" and other articles were later collected into a booklet on Homestead Shelter Planting. Finally, when an Assistant Farm Forest Officer was appointed, Mary's position was reclassified as 'professional'. Chapter 7 covers further time in the agricultural sector, mainly involved with farm shelter and plantations.

From time-to-time Mary had taken opportunities for travelling, including a sea trip to New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) after World War 2, and a trip around the Fiordland coast in the 1950s. Letters and diaries provided highlights of these trips. In 1952 Mary travelled to Europe and Canada for several months, visiting family and friends, but also forests and forestry operations, especially in Canada, and Chapter 8 follows this journey. On her return to New Zealand Mary resumed writing for the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*, and in June 1954, with an engineer, she co-authored "The use of timber in farm buildings".

Soon after its publication, she fell seriously ill with a kidney complaint, spending time in hospital, then with family before returning home. She resumed involvement with the Federation of University Women but was never well enough to return to work for the Department of Agriculture. She died in March 1955, two months before her 62nd birthday.

The Postscript of this book, 'A Forester's Legacy', describes her bequests, and includes extracts from published tributes. The current NZIF Mary Sutherland Scholarship was founded by a bequest from Mary. In 2016, 100 years after Mary's graduation, Bangor University created an award in Mary's memory, to be presented to the best female forestry graduate from their three forestry programmes.

A tribute after her death in 1955 noted that: "Forestry colleagues admired her vigorous, forthright nature, and friends and relatives remembered her sincerity, unselfishness, generosity, vitality and zest for life. The width of her interests and her understanding of people brought her many friends. Hers was a loveable personality."

The author, Vivien Edwards, states: "Mary was conscientious, she was a hard worker and she was a conservationist." Vivien also says of a woman she has got to know well over her years of research and writing: "She was really interested in not just her work but interested in what was going on in the world. She was resilient."

A path through the trees has a very readable text, is well-illustrated, and the sequence of sections flows well. This thoroughly researched, comprehensive, fully referenced book is a credit to the author, and is a valuable record of Mary Sutherland and the environment for women working in professional situations, especially forestry, agriculture, and natural sciences, during her lifetime. It provides insights into development of afforestation in Britain and then in New Zealand.

It tells a story of a remarkable woman who would be interesting to meet or work with, who appears to have met professional challenges by taking up different projects or moving to other workplaces where she could contribute knowledge, experience, and plenty of effort. The author indicates that in Mary's early

years, many men in professions such as forestry had difficulty accepting a university-qualified woman as a professional equal, but after World War 2, society and government organisations such as the New Zealand Department of Agriculture had shifted expectations a little, and men and women worked together on projects such as those Mary worked on. Mary's position was finally recognised as professional.

This is an inspiring story of someone who led an ordinary, yet an extraordinary life for her time, a life well-lived. We are indebted to the author, Vivien Edwards, for the years of work following up on her curiosity about Mary Sutherland's plaque in the Whakarewarewa redwoods to tell Mary's story, a story that needed to be shared.

Common Ground: Garden histories of Aotearoa

By Matt Morris

Published by Otago University Press, 2020

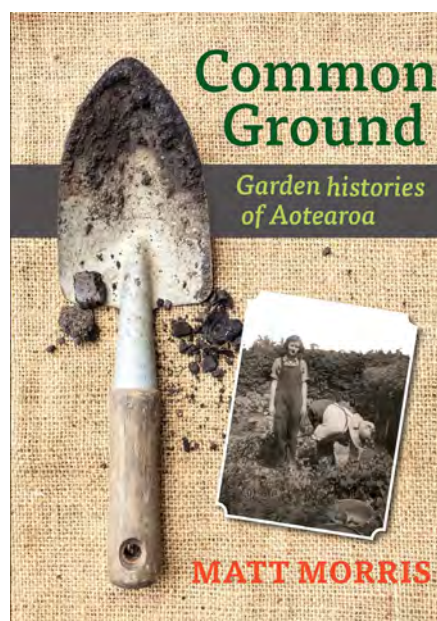
Paperback, colour illustrations, 284

pages, 240 × 170 mm

ISBN 9781988592572

\$NZ45.00

Reviewed by James Beattie



In *Common Ground: Garden histories of Aotearoa*, Matt Morris writes affectionately of our love affair with gardens through time. In it, expect to find stories of your uncle and aunty digging spuds or planting kūmara in the back garden, rather than details of the wealthy real estate developer and her husband quaffing cocktails on their mansion's manicured lawn. Morris draws from wide-ranging archival and published sources, as

well as interviews. The result is a fine-grained and touching history of our relationship with gardens.

But it is also much more than that. As the doyen of garden history, John Dixon Hunt, writes:

"It is not enough to look at gardens for their style..., nor even enough to assess their visual appearance. We need to ask why they came into being, what advantages and pleasures (including the visual, to be sure) accrue from them, and how and why they have survived, changed or vanished." (Hunt, 2012, p. 6).

Morris's book uses our relationship with gardens as a lens through which to examine issues fundamental both to our global existence as a species and particular to our own society in Aotearoa. Food production, extinction, ecological collapse, overuse of chemical pesticides and fertilisers jostle in this book with issues of the revival of mātauranga Māori and maramataka (lunar calendar planting), gardening as a 'civilising' enterprise, composting, gender, race and class. In *Common Ground*, Morris has indeed produced a particularly rich and loamy soil in which to grow a productive set of understandings around gardens, their use and meaning.

The author interweaves three themes into the book's eight, largely chronological chapters. In the first, Morris adopts a series of detailed, localised case studies to produce personal stories of people's relationships with the plants they grow, the soil they till, and the approaches they bring to gardening. Take the touching story of Hēnare Tomoana (a Ngāti Kahungunu rangitira and politician, born in the early decades of the 1800s) and whānau, related in Chapter 1. Like his father, a skilled and knowledgeable gardener, Tomoana's son Paraire believed that 'gardeners were part of the wholeness of creation'. Paraire later published his knowledge of maramataka. Unlike many others, his whānau appear to have retained their traditional knowledge.

The second theme is on gardening as a practice that can 'signify resistance to a dominant culture'. Here, Morris looks at movements that buck prevailing trends, whether the seemingly mundane, in which ordinary gardeners largely ignore

plant fashions promoted in gardening journals, to female gardeners breaking down gender boundaries, or composting as a reaction to perceived over-use of pesticides and herbicides.

The third theme considers gardens as parts of broader ecosystems and situates them within the broader field of environmental history, itself a well-established, if now somewhat threatened discipline in Aotearoa's academy. As Morris notes, gardening can use practices just as 'water-intensive, fossil-fuel hungry and poison-based' as the very worst of industrial agriculture.

Chapter 1, considering the period from 1800 to 1850, examines changes in Māori gardening. Māori, Morris illustrates, took up with gusto the opportunities presented to them to access a suite of global edible plants, by introducing, growing, and developing new species, as well as using them to set up a thriving export economy. Morris's chapter also presents a potted overview of changes to Māori gardening practices prior to European contact, and outlines the remarkable success of Māori gardening. Notwithstanding the ongoing success of this activity, as Morris shows, some European attitudes towards Māori gardening – that it was inefficient and that its labourers were lazy – became added justifications for the removal of Māori from their whenua.

Chapter 2, from colonisation to World War I, details the introduction of new plants, gardening practices and attitudes coincident with large-scale European colonisation. It tells the painful story of Māori dispossession through a focus on their gardens and includes a welcome discussion on Chinese market gardening. If Māori provided Europeans with most of their vegetables in the initial phase of colonisation, then it was Chinese market gardeners who took on the role from the 1870s as the primary suppliers of fresh fruit and vegetables to urban New Zealanders.

Chapter 3 moves briskly along to consider the City Beautiful and Garden City movements from the dawn of the twentieth century to 1940. Here, Morris showcases the impacts of rising wages, urbanisation and suburban expansion on the development of largely white civic gardening cultures and those who attempted to resist them. In general, he notes, a shift in emphasis took

place to encourage ornamental species. He provides expert analysis of the ways in which horticultural competitions, gardening societies and organisations were cross-cut by prevailing ideas of class, gender and race and health. Notably, he shows, the middle-classes sought to encourage particular kinds of gardening practices among the working classes and also emphasised the need to produce food healthy to the nation.

Chapter 4 pauses to examine the growing interest in native plants that developed among Pākehā in the early twentieth century, with a concentration on 1914 to 1935. An interest in native plants responded at once to growing white nationalism and conservation and an increasing identification with native plants. This situation developed in a context of wholesale loss of ecosystems (notably deforestation and wetlands drainage, and associated extinctions). Such a trend for natives, notes Morris, often found expression in the localisation of broader international gardening trends, such as rock gardening using both native and introduced plants. In this chapter, Morris points to the contradictions inherent in such movements, notably the loss of plants in the wild occasioned by an enthusiasm for collecting native plants.

Chapter 5 considers some of the countervailing gardening trends to emerge in the period from 1930 to 1950. Morris demonstrates the renewed importance played by productive gardens during the 1930s Depression, and discerns a gradual shift in attitudes towards composting: from views regarding it as a threat to hygiene and health to one recognising its importance in gardening practices from the 1940s. For some, like members of the NZ Humic Compost Society, a critique of capitalism and industrial modes of production and its environmental costs began at the garden gate. A healthy soil produced healthy vegetables, healthy people and a healthy society. Morris notes that, despite landlessness and low home ownership rates, some Māori continued with traditional gardening practices.

In Chapter 6, Morris details the kinds of thinking the likes of the Humic Society – and others in the organic movement – were reacting against: High Modernism, with its attendant faith in science and progress. Morris

discerns growing societal pressure and expectations, from 1920 to 1980, for gardeners to use toxins in their gardens – to keep lawns immaculate, to rid vegetables and fruit of pests, and to remove weeds from newly concreted paths. "Looking back, it was as if weeds had become a kind of social disease that threatened to overwhelm the veneer of suburbia," writes Morris. For modern-day gardeners, he lists an alarming set of chemicals – all touted as safe and healthy at the time – recommended in nursery catalogues and gardening columns throughout the country. On one end of the spectrum were those who advocated no chemicals in gardens; on the other, those who trumpeted the use of every new chemical to come on the market. In reality, notes Morris, most gardeners were pragmatic, seeing both chemical and compost as complimentary means to the same end.

Chapter 7, concentrating on the period from 1960 to 2020, charts the decline (and possible recent renaissance) of the productive garden. With longer working hours and smaller sections (thanks to subdivision), and with access to supermarkets and greater leisure opportunities, homeowners replaced productive gardens with ornamental, low-maintenance ones – or ripped them out entirely. In real estate advertisements of houses from the 1960s, notes Morris, car garages replaced descriptions of carrots and carnations, a symbol of the changing times. Modernity may have ushered in the rise of the garden centre, the end of the large family garden and marked a break in the transmission of gardening knowledge from one generation to another, yet notes Morris, it also saw the rise of communal gardens, a general uptake of composting and the growth, in the 1980s, of organic gardening. There was also a rise in marae gardens and a rekindling of interest in traditional varieties and gardening techniques. All is not lost.

The concluding chapter – appropriately titled 'Dreams' – reflects on the book's main themes and looks ahead to garden futures. "Home gardens will brim again with fruit and vegetables," Morris believes, "and many of these will be grown from heirloom seeds ... now rediscovered for their nutritive properties, disease resistance and vibrant colours." Urban spaces, community gardens and

possibly also urban orchards will gain in popularity; climate change will bring changes to plant composition; lawns will diminish in popularity; the discrete flower garden may well make way for mixed vegetable, herbs and flower patches, set amidst bush.

In some respects, recent events have borne out much of what Morris divined: the importance of locally sourced, healthy, and home-produced food when supply chains are disrupted; the necessity of public and private garden places for recreation and one's mental health.

As an academic who taught garden histories at the University of Waikato's History Programme for almost ten years, I can safely say that this is the best general work on the topic to have come out in the last two decades or more (Beattie and Holmes, 2011). It ranks up there with Matthew Bradbury's *A history of the garden in New Zealand* (1995). One of *Common Ground's* particular strengths is its consideration of the garden in its broader political, social, racialised, gendered and (especially) ecological context. This is a case to make, that the garden must be considered in broader environmental histories (Beattie, 2018). Another strength is its consideration of vernacular gardens – the gardens of non-élite. My hope is that this book will convince other scholars (and university administrators) of the importance of the topic of gardens as a lens through which to view a whole range of issues facing modern and recent society.

As someone involved in post-earthquake community gardening initiatives, as a passionate advocate for composting and organics, and as Sustainability Officer, University of Canterbury Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, Morris clearly holds this project close to his heart. It comes across in his lively and impassioned prose and, equally, in the choice of topic. But it also reflects the careful historian's training, in the attentiveness to detail and context, and in the avoidance of clichéd pastiches of the past that rely on simplistic constructions of good and bad. The past, no less than the present, is a complex beast. Morris's inclusion of Māori in discussions of post-contact gardens is particularly welcome, and contrasts with their exclusion in other earlier works such as Bee Dawson's book (2010).

Morris's discussion of urban gardening and beautification is fascinating and nuanced, but debates over the form and nature of public urban gardens date much earlier: class tensions broke out over management of Dunedin's Town Belt in the 1850s and simmered away uneasily over later decades, a situation mirrored in Auckland and, I hazard, across many other colonial towns (Beattie, 2020). Discussion of the early twentieth-century rock garden could have benefitted from examining the influence of David Tannock whose work, through the book *Rock gardening in New Zealand* and the example of the garden he had built in Dunedin Botanic Garden, did much to popularise this design and New Zealand alpinism. These are but minor quibbles in an outstanding work. This is a handsome, well-designed book that does justice to this fine study. Amply illustrated – and with many photographs in colour – the book is one that should have wide appeal. And rightly so.

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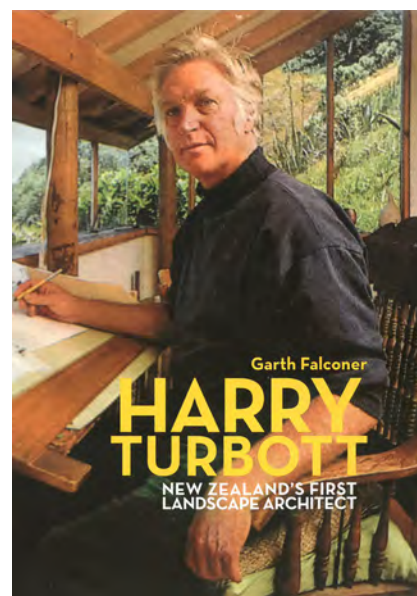
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A historian, James Beattie is an associate professor in the Centre for Science in Society at Victoria University of Wellington, and Honorary Curator, Lan Yuan: Dunedin

Chinese Garden. He chairs the Garden History Research Foundation and is founding co-editor of the Routledge book series Routledge Research on Gardens in History. His latest garden history book is *Gardens at the Frontier: New methodological perspectives on garden history and designed landscapes* (Routledge, 2018). He lives in Dunedin with his two daughters, amidst a productive but messy garden.

Harry Turbott: New Zealand's first landscape architect

By Garth Falconer
Published by Blue Acres Publishing, Wanaka, November 2020.
Hardback and paperback, 224 pages, 165 × 220 mm
ISBN 978-0473517496
\$NZ75.00
Available from Unity books and Reset Urban Design.
Reviewed by Penny Clifflin, Senior Lecturer, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland.



This book provides an important record and tribute to one of the founding pioneers of landscape architecture in New Zealand. Garth Falconer, landscape architect and urban designer first met Harry when he was studying at Lincoln University, and wrote this book in recognition of Harry's contribution to the profession. He is also the author of *Living Paradox: A history of urban design in New Zealand*.

Following a degree in architecture from Auckland University, Harry Turbott completed a Master of

Landscape Architecture at Harvard University, in 1958. On his return home Harry was the first to teach landscape architecture at a NZ university, and the first to establish a multi-person landscape architecture office in this country.

The book chronicles Harry's early life in Gisborne in the 1930s, his university days in Auckland and then at Harvard, then working for Dan Kiley in Vermont. On returning to NZ in 1961, after travelling and working overseas for nearly four years, Harry and wife Nan settled at Karekare Beach, West Auckland. Harry taught part-time at Auckland University and began Turbott Associates Landscape Architects, which grew steadily over subsequent years.

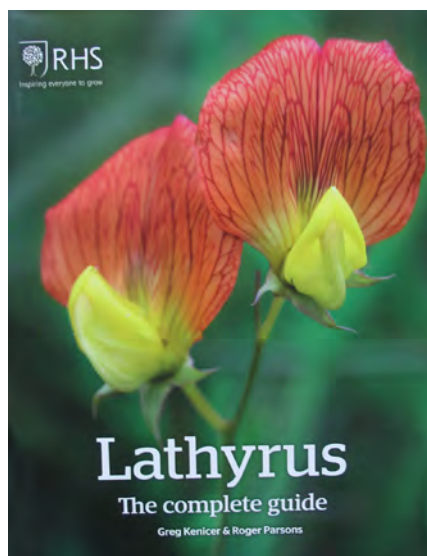
The book is well illustrated with personal photos of Harry's life and family, along with images of architecture and landscapes which influenced him as a designer. Harry's affinity with nature and concern for the public good drew him to contribute to many civic projects such as Arataki Visitor's Centre in the Waitakere Ranges, Freemans Bay council flats, the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) in Auckland, national park structures and native motorway planting projects with an ecological focus, and other restoration projects in NZ and the wider Pacific.

As a young landscape technician in the 1980s and working for Brian Halstead who had worked for Harry Turbott in the 1970s, I could see the influence of Harry's concerns and scope of work in the projects undertaken by Halstead and Associates. Brian contributed to a chapter of the book, reflecting on working with Harry on a resort project for Mimiwhangata Beach in Northland where they convinced the developer to tone back the scale and impact of the planned development to protect the sensitive local coastal landscape and marine environment.

Author Garth Falconer has provided a rich record of Harry's contribution and legacy to his profession, including interviews with Harry before he died in March 2016, contributions from colleagues and associates, along with imagery and plans of the projects which confirms him as a pioneer of landscape architecture and sustainable development in Aotearoa New Zealand.

***Lathyrus*: The complete guide**

By Greg Kenicer and Roger Parsons
Published by the Royal Horticultural Society, May 2021
Hardback, 511 pages
ISBN: 9781911666127
NZ\$75
Reviewed by Dr Keith Hammett



We often hear the phrase that a book was too good to put down. I experienced this recently when the monograph *Lathyrus: The complete guide*, written by Greg Kenicer and Roger Parsons arrived. I knew that Greg and Roger had been working on it for several years, but I had not anticipated hard covers and 511 pages.

Both UK authors are eminently well qualified to write on this subject. Roger Parsons owns a *Lathyrus* nursery, 'Roger Parsons Sweet Peas', near Chichester in West Sussex, where he also holds a National Plant Collection of the genus. He was Chairman of the National Sweet Pea Society from 2017 to 2020. Greg Kenicer is based at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and is a specialist in wild *Lathyrus* diversity. He completed a PhD on the South American species and has studied the biogeography, evolution and taxonomy of *Lathyrus*. He also oversees a National Plant Collection of the genus held at RBGE.

The book is a remarkable fusion of botany, horticulture and horticultural history made very readable. In an era when many books fall into the coffee table genre, the vast number of images and quality of paper might fool one, but make no mistake; this book is monumental and will be referred to for decades to come.

I have an extensive collection of sweet pea books and nothing comparable has been achieved or even attempted previously. There is a wealth of horticultural history, meticulously researched within the pages. The histories of individual breeders and companies are recorded on a worldwide basis which researchers in the future will find invaluable.

The book is described by the publisher as having:

- All 150 species described in detail with 95 photographs, plus a key to aid identification
- More than 500 sweet pea cultivars and 25 other *Lathyrus* cultivars illustrated and fully described
- Detailed history of the introduction of the sweet pea and other *Lathyrus* into gardens
- An account of sweet pea breeders and how they developed the sweet pea into its many modern types
- The botany and classification of the genus, including its world distribution and habitats
- The history and crop uses of *Lathyrus* around the world
- A checklist of around 1,200 cultivar names, 700 scientific names and 400 raisers and nurseries
- Advice on cultivation and the best ways to use sweet peas and other *Lathyrus* in gardens.

The Royal Horticultural Society is to be congratulated for bringing botany and horticulture back together in a series of plant monographs, of which this is the fifth. *Lathyrus: The complete guide* shares company with the other books in the series: *Colchicum: The complete guide* (2020), *Wisteria: The complete guide* (2019), *Hedera: The complete guide* (2017), and *Kniphofia: The complete guide* (2016).