



Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

Annual Report

August 2019

This report outlines the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden's achievements from June 2018 to July 2019.

The position of president of the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden is a two-year post and my term is up and so I reflect back on what has been achieved.

I started my tenure with a strategic planning meeting that included a SWOT analysis believing it critical for an organisation to take stock of past achievements and set new goals in order to stay relevant.

Of the many opportunities identified, improving the information centre shop stock was an obvious and easy one to implement. It is also an area where visitors are fairly 'forthright' in their opinions. Staffed entirely by volunteers and with a limited space it is, until these limitations change, important to keep the range of stock manageable. In the new stock there is a strong botanical and bird theme while made in New Zealand is also very important. Mostly the items are flat-packable in this way keeping our overseas visitors in mind. We have achieved our goal here with shop sales well over double that of previous years but, given the will, there remains what is almost an unlimited potential for further expansion.

A growing membership is critical for the Friends organisation. The Garden has very loyal support from local visitors and the overseas visitor numbers are the envy of the other major city attractions but this does not translate into new members of the Friends. The committee devoted some time to considering ways to convert more visitors into members and the decision was made to substantially reduce membership fees and offer incentives that include a 10% discount on shop purchases and the May Plant Sale. Stock should be taken in the future to see if this has had the effect of increasing membership.

Scholarship

The David Tannock Scholarship was launched last year. The aim of the Scholarship, funded by the proceeds from the Rhododendron Plant Sale, is to assist with professional development for the Garden staff, allowing a deserving member of the team to meet their professional objectives.

The first recipient of the award is collection curator Dylan Norfield who headed to Tasmania to explore

possible seed exchange and other reciprocal opportunities with the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. We look forward to hearing about this trip at our 2019 AGM.

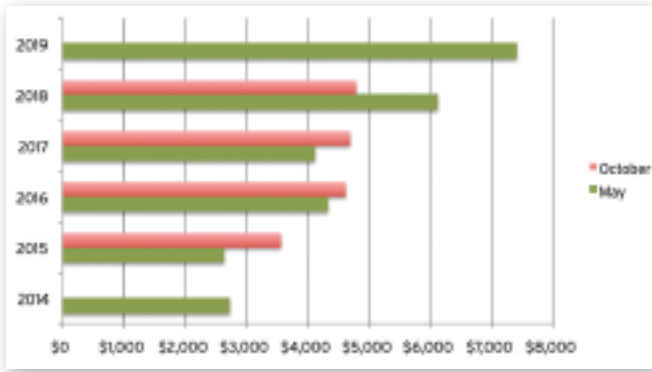
The second recipient is Blake Kuiper, a third year apprentice at the Botanic Garden. Blake is heading to Hungary to join the International Dendrology Society tour of the country in September of this year. Blake will share his experiences on his return.

There is a third submission in preparation.

Information Centre

Thanks to our treasurer, Kathryn Thatcher, for researching and installing our new, user-friendly till and for the training days for our volunteers. We are very fortunate to have a great team of volunteers who generously give their time each week to promote the Garden, give out a considerable amount of duck food and now keep the shop display looking good. Thanks to you all.





Plant Sales

The Friends annual May plant sale had a fantastic turnout, probably largely due to a Facebook presence. The Propagation Centre was full to bursting with bargain hunters shortly after the doors opened at 9am and we reached a new record in takings (for the second year in a row) with \$7,400 raised.

Thank you to the following nurseries for their generous support enabling us to host both the May and the October annual plant sales: Blue Mountain Nurseries; Goodlife Gardens; Neale & Craig McLanachan; Blueskin Nurseries; Hereweka Nursery; Mitre 10 Mega; Bluestone Nursery; Hokonui Alpines; Otago Polytechnic; Broad Bay Boating Club; Iris Society; David Lyttle; Wake Robin Nursery; James Cordery; Mick & Susan McKenzie; Youthgrow Nursery.

Garden Successes

Congratulations to all the Garden staff involved with the reopening of the Winter Garden after undergoing its long-awaited renovation - it looks grand and visitors love it.



Membership

Membership to the Friends has seen a very modest increase, subscriptions to the e-newsletter has trebled in two years.

Looking Ahead

The Garden Team Leader/Curator, Alan Matchett has established a working party to review the Botanic Garden Management Plan. Led by the Parks Planning section there are representatives from Parks, industry sectors, the Botanic Garden and the Friends. Committee member Mick Reece represents the Friends over the duration of the review, we look forward to hearing progress reports.

The long-term (10-20 year) Strategic Development/Master Plan for the Garden is also progressing. As a strategic partner the Friends committee will be supporting Alan during the process of reviewing the previous plan and will drive to increase support to what is a seriously under-resourced asset.

And finally, the Demonstration Garden. I thank those supporters who have pledged significant amounts of money for their patience. We await quantity surveyors reports and estimates of costs before submitting funding applications to support this project getting underway.

I thank the committee and you, our members for your support during the year and wish the Friends well under the guidance of a new president.

Lesley Smith, President
Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden