

Autumn 2021

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter. Since the first lock-down 12 months ago we have all had to operate a little differently but scanning, hand sanitising and sanitising all surfaces has become the 'new normal' for us in the Information Centre. We continue to engage with children and families coming to the garden to feed the resident ducks, and despite the lack of international travellers we have had lots of visitors from other parts of New Zealand. The committee of Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden work with Garden management to support projects and fundraise for these. The sale of plants in the Information Centre is a great source of additional income for us and we are grateful to the team at the Propagation facility who prepare and nurture plants until they are ready for sale. Last year we were not able to have our annual May plant sale, but this will take place at the Propagation building in Lovelock Avenue on Saturday 8 May. We look forward to seeing you at the sale or please just make yourself known when you are in the Information Centre.

Sue Lambie, President of the Friends

INFORMATION CENTRE UPDATE

A new feature is an array of artisan products made in Dunedin and we have repurposed our tall glass cabinet to hold these special items. We have attractive rimu & paua earrings from Leading Etch and beautiful wood products from Jonathan Leichter, woodturner – some of Jonathan's pieces are from trees from the Dunedin Botanic Garden which have been felled, or damaged. In the same display case we have two different art prints by Janet Smith, both depicting the Dunedin Botanic Garden, and we have a limited quantity of Mihiwaka honey.

Plants raised and cared for by a group of volunteers working in the propagation facility continue to be very popular, especially indoor plants, which we can hardly keep up with.

Profits are used by the Friends' committee to support projects and future developments in the Garden.



CREST AT THE DUNEDIN BOTANIC GARDEN

You will have seen our Train taking visitors around the Garden but how many know what CREST stands for and what we do?

CREST (Children's Recreational Enterprise Support Trust) is a registered charity run by volunteers raising money which goes towards needy children in the Dunedin area. We give help towards extra curricula activities in schools, club and organization fees and health needs. Recently we have given to Heart Kids and Chatbus. While we have many regular customers, new customers are often surprised to learn we have been operating for 29 years. We have parents bringing their children now who remember enjoying the ride when they were children. We also operate the electric Shuttle Bug which can travel to the upper car park as well as the Lower Garden. This is quieter at present due to the lack of overseas visitors and our limited number of drivers.

It has been a busy time for CREST as the old tractor needed to be replaced and a newer tractor has been bought. After Covid level 4 ended we were able to get on with the changeover and altering the cab to fit the new tractor. At the moment we have three different names on the Train and none are catchy. So as the cab needs a repaint we have taken the opportunity to think about putting a new name on it. We had a good response to our article in the Star and enjoyed a busy Saturday as visitors came for a ride and voted for their choice of name. Unfortunately we couldn't extend it to the Sunday as we shifted back into level 2. The response on the Saturday was very clear with the biggest vote going to Bluebell. This will be sign-written on when the cab is repainted in the quieter season.

Our present team of six drivers and two driver- support members love seeing passengers enjoy our rides. We have an attractive website, crestrides.org.nz which gives lots of details and has application forms for grants and new volunteers. CREST is run by a board of trustees, some of whom are drivers. At present we are seeking a secretary to replace our long serving lady and we always welcome new members to the CREST team.

Like the Information Centre we aim to enhance the Garden experience. Most of our drivers give a commentary adding to passengers' appreciation of the plants, features and history of the garden. It is a privilege to be able to operate here and we value our cooperation with the Friends who make us feel welcome.



VOLUNTEERS

University students (left to right) Faiqa and Taskeen Fatima, Fiona Collie and Iona Grigor, say volunteering at the Dunedin Botanic Garden's Visitor Centre is one way to give back to a place which has played an important role in their experience of Dunedin.

Third-year students Fiona and Iona live close to the Garden which they visited a lot during lockdown, and say volunteering is a great opportunity to interact with communities and families outside of the university environment (it also has the added bonus of providing a break from the books!).

Sisters Taskeen and Faiqa both arrived in Dunedin from their hometown of Bangalore in India just before 2020 lockdown. They both flat together and study food science and say because they were brought up surrounded by plants, they are regular visitors of the Botanic Garden. “The garden is one of the best and easily accessible natural getaways in the city and so close to campus,” Taskeen says. “As we visit here a lot, volunteering is a great chance to give back, and it’s also the perfect excuse to come here even more!”

The sisters haven’t been back to India since their arrival and say even though their parents are relieved they are in New Zealand at the moment, they do miss seeing them in person. “We are grateful we are here however, as we enjoy Dunedin and there’s a good community of other Indian students here too for additional support,” Faiqa says.

When they first arrived in Dunedin, it took a while for Taskeen and Faiqa to get used to the low population and traffic, but those are the very things the sisters love about studying here. “They are the very reasons we chose to study here in the first place,” Faiqa says. “Dunedin is like a hill station town in India where locals and tourists go on holiday”.



A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A RANGER

A quick overview of what the rangers get up to:

- 226 Adults caught on their bikes
- 131 on skateboards
- 173 disorderly behaviour (Breaking things, hurting things or drunkenness/partying)
- 57 dogs
- 31 other (first aid, lost children, fallen down tree, bird injuries.....)

Things a bit different:

- A lady releasing her pet ducks into the duck pond – only to have to rush out into the water and re-catch them after our resident ducks took offence to the intruders and attacked them.
- Found an older couple (65+) digging bulbs out of the daffodil lawn.
- A female tourist stripping in the glasshouse. She got wet in the rain shower and had stripped off and hung all her clothes on the vents to dry
- Teenage girl stuck in the public toilet.

- A female tourist stripping in the glasshouse. She got wet in the rain shower and had stripped off and hung all her clothes on the vents to dry
- Teenage girl stuck in the public toilet.
- A couple in their 60's came into the info centre to complain about the naughty students that have put a cone over the Mediterranean garden fountain and therefore the water isn't spraying properly. Aileen points out this garden is coned off due to a major wash out. They said they climbed around the cones and tiger tails. Part 2 to this - while Aileen was removing the cone they reappeared at the closed Mediterranean garden having climbed the barrier a second time to come and see if the cone had been removed yet. Naughty students indeed!
- We had a new driver in his truck that drove partially across the garden and lawn at the rose garden to park outside the info centre to deliver a small box.
- The student tradition of carrying the bath through the gardens while others pelt them with eggs and flour.
- There was a lot of over zealous canoodling in the gardens.
- We had a couple of homeless people 'camping' in the lower garden.
- Temperature -3 in the garden in June and an 18-month-old girl runs around completely naked while family takes pictures of her in the frost.
- Students swimming in the duck pond.
- 6 injured ducks, pigeons and birds in the rangers office waiting for pickup or to be delivered or nursed back to health – or to die in peace.
- Rangers have retrieved several items out of the duck pond lost by kids.
- Aileen has re-united 7 people with their cellphones after either posting on Dunedin News, calling emergency contacts in their phone (one emergency contact was the Dad of the student who lost it, and the Dad answered it in Denmark) or looking up Facebook when a message shows up on the home screen.
- The rangers have re-united 10 children with their families – or families with their children.

No day is ever the same.



Our two rangers Aileen Ramsay and Eric Odell

2021 - RHODODENDRON DAY TURNS 50!!

This year in October will be the 50th anniversary of Rhododendron Day. We plan to arrange some special events to celebrate this auspicious occasion. To this end we are liaising with other organisations and would welcome any suggestions from our members.

MEMBERSHIP

The subscription renewal period has become a bit 'confused' and requests for membership renewals have not been done in a timely manner. The membership database is something that has not been maintained and we have now appointed a dedicated Membership Secretary from our committee to help get the database up to date and to more accurately reflect our financial members. Due to Covid-19 restrictions imposed last year we have decided to let memberships roll-over and will issue membership renewal requests at the beginning of the new financial year 1 July 2021.

CORPSE FLOWER BLOOMING

When the corpse flower was blooming Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden were given the opportunity to have a donation box in the Winter Garden. \$696 was collected over the few days of flowering and this will go towards funding other projects in the Garden. We would like to thank everyone who took this opportunity to make a donation.



MAY PLANT SALE

SATURDAY 8 MAY
9.00 am to 12 noon

Propagation Facility
Lovelock Avenue, Dunedin

~~ bring own bags and boxes~~
~~ recycle clean plastic plant pots~~

*10% discount available to members of
Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden!*

Contact Details

Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

PO Box 8097, Gardens, Dunedin 9041

Phone: 03 471 9275

Website: www.friendsdbg.co.nz

Email: friends@friendsdbg.co.nz

Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden is an incorporated society
formed in 1986 to support the Dunedin Botanic Garden.

Charity Registration Number CC33448