



Friends News

Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

Christmas 2020

PRESIDENT'S PREAMBLE

Annual General Meeting

The members and friends who attended the AGM on Sunday 13th September were treated to a very interesting presentation from Barbara Wheeler about the Fellow programme at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania for which she was accepted last year along with 5 other recipients. It is an extremely prestigious and rigorous leadership training programme which even covers etiquette and social skills to assist the participants with social and meeting protocols.

The Friends are in a good financial position in spite of the Information Centre and shop being closed from mid March until 19th June. Cruise ship visitors do assist us with our retail sales but the season was coming to an end so our situation is not very different from the same period last year. Sales from plants raised by the propagation team continue to be very popular with locals and there are regulars who call in every week to see what is available.

Membership of the Friends has remained fairly static and the reduction in membership fees a couple of years ago does not seem to have encouraged new members. The annual subscription for an individual is only \$15.00 and becoming a financial member of Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden does assist with some of our operating costs.

In 2018 it was announced that the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden would assist with funding and funding applications for the construction of a Demonstration Garden in the upper garden. The Friends are committed to assisting with this project and have also had an offer of funding from several generous benefactors. However, the long-term Strategic Development and Management Plan for the garden, instigated by the Dunedin City Council, has had had set-backs, not exclusively because of Covid-19, but that has certainly had an impact on the time frame for preparation of a workable plant which can be used to apply to funding institutions. So at the moment the Demonstration Garden project has stalled.

We have increased the retail stock with quality gifts having a floral or bird theme and many visitors comment on what a great selection we have. However, the increase in retail activity brings its own problems, not the least of which is stock control, stock taking and all the financial aspects of having a business. The Information Centre and shop continues to be run entirely by volunteers but with this increase we may have to consider employing a shop manager who would be responsible for all of the tasks relating to the shop. If we continue to expand our stock and increase the sales at the rate we have this financial year we will certainly be looking at how we can fund such an appointment.

I thank the Botanic Garden staff for their willingness to assist us with a wide range of things and

particularly to Alan Matchett for his wise oversight and assistance with management of the Information Centre. Also thanks to Eric Odell and Aileen Ramsay, DCC Rangers who are based in the Information Centre and especially Aileen for assisting with ongoing training for volunteers and being able to help with gaps in the volunteer roster. We have got a really good team of volunteers but there is still room for more and we would love to hear from anyone interested in assisting in this way.

Please do identify yourself as a 'Friend' when you come into the Centre – we would love to meet you.

Sue Lambie

President, Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden



A Botanical Adventure of a Lifetime by Blake Kuiper

In September 2019 I, (then a second year horticulture apprentice at Dunedin Botanic Garden) embarked on an adventure of a lifetime after being selected for a bursary to join in a six day tour with the International Dendrology Society (IDS) to see the botanical treasures of Hungary (and afterwards some world class gardens to be found in the UK). This adventure opened my eyes to a much bigger world and the possibilities that were out there.

It's hard to give Hungary justice when describing the beauty of its landscape, magnificent renaissance style buildings, it's incredibly rich culture and the resilience found in its people. Hungary is a landlocked country that today sits between Slovakia, Austria, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Over centuries it has been fought over between the Austrians and the Turks with the respective architectural and agricultural influences are still evident today.

In total we visited ten botanic (and private) gardens, arboreta and a large wholesale nursery in Hungary. Beginning with Fűvészkert Botanical Garden we encountered treasures such as a grove of towering 200 year old Ginkgo biloba and some beautiful old bonsai specimens including one Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Nana Gracilis' which was about 90 years old. Other treats included visits to historical sites such as the Great (Tabakgasse) Synagogue, Hungary's enormous Parliament House (which was built on the banks of the Danube River) and the Pannonhalma Archabbey.

Some of the common trees found throughout the countryside we observed included Populus alba, Fraxinus excelsior, Aesculus hippocastanum, Quercus robur, Tilia spp. and Robinia pseudoacacia (the latter an exotic from North America, now widespread in Hungary). Our first stop outside Budapest was the National Botanical Garden in Vácrátót where we were met by the director Kósa Géza. On this 27 hectare garden we admired the size of some majestic giants proudly standing some 30 to 40 m tall. The focus here is Far East and central Asian species, many of which have been wild collected by Kósa himself.

The stunning 27 hectares of Kámoni Arboretum in Szombathely was probably one of the most fascinating gardens we visited. The soil here was slightly acidic (unlike elsewhere around the country) and to our delight it included Magnolia, Rhododendron

and some rare conifers. A 130-year-old *Liriodendron tulipifera*, probably the largest *Liriodendron* in the country, was particularly striking. Beside one of the ponds stood *Taxodium ascendens* with very fine scale leaves, which we were able to compare with the more commonly known *Taxodium distichum*.

Following my time in Hungary I was then privileged to visit some of the great gardens to be found in the UK at the invitation of some IDS members living there. This was the 'cherry on top' to be able to see the incredible gardens of Kew, Cambridge Botanic and York Arboretum, seeing many exciting 'behind the scenes' and learning of new developments taking place there. This trip would not have been possible without the generous financial, professional and moral support given me in the lead up, during and after my return. There was not only the very kind financial support of the bursary provided by the International Dendrology Society (IDS) but also specifically that which came from the Tannock Scholarship offered to me by the Friends of Dunedin Botanic Garden and also the support from members of the IDS from the New Zealand region. My workplace, Dunedin Botanic Garden, and my employer 4Trades, provided me with professional support, allowing me to take four weeks to go overseas; resources and professional coaching to prepare for the upcoming trip. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge with enormous gratitude the moral support I received from the staff of Dunedin Botanic Garden.

Since returning from this trip, I have endeavoured to remain in contact with my fellow horticulture and dendrology enthusiasts. I am continuing to work towards my personal goal in becoming a curator in a botanic garden, benefiting from the wonderful educational and skill development opportunities found and where I can contribute my own knowledge/experiences from this amazing trip to Hungary.

Blake Kuiper undertook an apprenticeship at Dunedin Botanic Garden and achieved both New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Services (Level 4) (Amenity) and Dunedin Botanic Garden Certificate. As well as being a bursary recipient for the IDS Tour to Hungary, Blake also completed in the Amenity Young Horticulturist of the Year and placed 2nd. Prior to his time at Dunedin Botanic Garden, Blake undertook a Students Volunteer Botanical Internship Program (Australian National Herbarium) in 2012 and a Bachelor of Environmental Science & Management (University of Newcastle) in 2013.

PLANT SALE



Our annual October plant sale was held on Sunday 18th October in the upper garden car park. This was open to the public from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm and by 8.30 am there was a queue forming behind the barrier whilst stall holders were setting up. By the time we removed the barrier the queue went across the daffodil lawn and down the road towards the propagation unit, Some people know exactly what they are coming for and by 9.15 am the rhododendrons on our stall were all gone. We had a couple of stall holders who were new to our event and they enjoyed the interaction with the public and all appeared to have a successful sales day,



Next year will be the 50th anniversary of Rhododendron Day Week in Dunedin and the Friends committee hope to make the 2021 event extra special so keep an eye out for details in future newsletters.

Information Centre

We have a great team of volunteers working in the Information Centre which enables us to keep the centre open for the advertised hours of 10.00am to 4.00pm every day of the year except Good Friday and Christmas Day. We are always keen to hear from anyone wishing to find out about this role and we provide training alongside experienced volunteers. The day is broken into two shifts of 3 hours each -10.00am to 1.00pm and 1.00pm to 4.00pm, so people are still able to do other things without having a full day commitment.

Application forms are available in the Information Centre (just ask the volunteer on duty), or people can send an email and I will get back to them. (Friends@friendsdbg.co.nz)

Shop

The Information Centre shop is stocked with a range of quality gift lines, many of which have been selected for their suitability for posting. As well as the placemats, coasters and tea towels which we have always stocked we recently included ceramic trivets and hearts in a New Zealand botanical theme, little porcelain bowls with iconic native plants etched on them, some attractive Christmas cards and prints of an original painting by local artist Janet Smith. For the children there are some "Little Kiwi" story books, some jigsaw puzzles - one of a fantail and the other a huia - and a good supply of our ever popular rubber stamps of a kiwi, gecko, tuatara and penguin. Do come in and have a look around.

Looking for Uniquely New Zealand Gifts?

The Information Centre at the Botanic Garden stocks lots of cool, easy to post gifts such as:

- 2021 calendars
- Placemats and coasters
- Artwork
- Journals
- Books
- Kitchenware
- Greeting cards

Open 10am to 4pm everyday



MEMBERSHIP

The subscription renewal period has got a bit 'confused' and some requests for membership renewal have not gone out when they should. This is in our hands entirely and on behalf of the Friends I apologise if you have been affected by this oversight. The membership database is one of the things that has been overlooked this year and we have now appointed a Membership Secretary to help get the database up to date and to more accurately reflect our numbers. People who have not paid a subscription for a couple of years are no longer considered to be members of the association.

Christmas Party

Volunteer Christmas Party

Friday 11th December
4pm

At the Information
Centre

All financial members are invited to attend. For catering purposes please rsvp by 7 December to friends@friendsdbg.co.nz or phone the Information Centre 471 9275



Contact Details

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

Charity Registration Number CC33448



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