



New Zealand Branch

December 2017 - Newsletter 19

PUKEITI'S NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Pukeiti has recently reached a significant mile stone in the Council's upgrade programme with the opening of the Rainforest Centre by the Governor General Dame Patsy Reddy on September 9th.

Greg Rine, Regional Gardens Manager with the Taranaki Regional Council says that 'in todays world we need to build clusters of experiences in and around a garden so we can attract a much wider group of people than our traditional visitor.' They have many plans to do just that.

The Rainforest Centre makes a major statement. Once visitors are inside the building they get a taste of the history and culture of the place with some story telling. That includes the local iwi and hapu and the pioneers that displayed that typical Anglo-Saxon zeal of the day only to be gradually beaten back by the climate and topography of the area. There's also the story of Douglas Cook's quest to find a great place to grow the beautiful rhododendrons and all that which followed the first land purchase in 1951.

The building also includes the Founders Café open 7 day a week till the end of march. Below that the Rata Room that's available for functions. It can also be used as a spillover area for the café during busy times. The covered areas (Vireya Walk and Kokopu House) are now complete. The landscaping is intended to have an exotic feel featuring vireya rhododendrons. Further on there is Waterwheel Walkway which connects visitors directly with the Rainforest, the working waterwheel and mountain stream.

Other improvements have included:

- Improved access with track upgrades
- New wayfinding and signage telling the story about how the rhodos were introduced to the western world
- Treehouses that provide a sheltered destination, and an educational resource, designed to safely house a classroom of kids. For the 'Secret Kids Treehouse Trail' children can pick up an activity bag from the Café and take the secret trails between each treehouse and learn about the animals of Pukeiti.

The Kellier Rhododendron Garden, a joint project with the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, is now really starting to look good with the growth of the plantings and the gradual softening of the structures and with the ultimate aim of inspiring gardeners to grow rhodos in their own garden

- The Misty Knoll is a secret garden that aims to create a sense of surprise and escapism.
- This summer's project is the Weka Wetland intended to raise awareness and value and value of wetlands.

The other major project at present is the Lodge that will have a classical character and will become a home for the Trust members .The landscaping will be classical to match the architecture. It will include a members lounge and a studio flat.

There is more to come for Pukeiti in terms of the recreational opportunities in the surrounding Rainforest but next the focus will be on marketing the new facilities.



TOP & ABOVE: New entrance



ABOVE: The new Founders Café

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Auckland Botanic Gardens

The biennial Sculpture in the Gardens (www.sculptureinthegardens.nz) was opened on November 8th by Auckland's Deputy Mayor Bill Cashmore. This event is run by the Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens and runs through to February 25th.

ABG are also celebrating receiving two major national awards. The New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) announced at their annual conference that the Gardens are the 'Outstanding Park 2017', and Julia Watson, our Senior Gardener Education & Partnerships, was awarded the 'NZRA Emerging Leader of the Year 2017'.

Several staff attended overseas conferences this year, funded by both the Friends and BGANZ grants, which we are very grateful for. Julia Watson attend the American Public Garden Association conference in Ontario in June, Bec Stanley (Curator) the BGCI conference in Geneva; and Mere Brewer (Senior Gardner collections), Micheline Newton (Manager Visitor Services) and Jack Hobbs (Gardens Manager) attended the BGANZ congress in Adelaide.

Christchurch Botanic Gardens

In April the CBG Spatial Plan was signed off by Council, this plan is driven from the 2007 Management Plan and it will be used over the next 30 years to seek funding for a number of major development projects.

'Enchanted Garden Exhibition' which is a collection of floral creations inspired by the beautiful surrounds of the Botanic Gardens by Jenney Gillies. Has been extended to June 2018.

From the beginning of November, the Ilex Café and Function Room in the BG Visitor Centre has had a new lease holder. 'The Good Company'. Its team is led by well-known local chief Jonny Schwass.

The CBG was again a host to SCAPE public art exhibition. This is a 2 month exhibition held in October and November in public spaces, in and around Christchurch's CBD. One piece by artist Ana Iti installed on the glass panels of the CBG Nursery, has had its season extended to February 2018.

In October a Change Proposal was announced for the CCC Parks Unit which CBG staff are a part of. Staff have been asked for feedback and a final decision will be announced in December with implementation of the new structure in Mid-January 2018.

Dunedin Botanic Gardens

There have been no significant developments at Dunedin Botanic Garden recently but a number of smaller projects that have come to fruition. One of our biggest challenges over the last 3 months has been to keep on top of the vigorous spring growth and taking advantage of the finer weather during our preparations for the Other points of interest include:-

Overseas student internship enquires continue to grow with 6 placements this year, some have been short term and others will continue into 2018. The Botanic Garden is now hooked up to New Zealand's fastest Wifi network as part of the Dunedin wide Giga Wifi project. Preparations are being made for the New Zealand Garden Trust 2 yearly assessment.

A new Kiwi Guardian site has been installed in the Garden by DOC. This was launched during Rhododendron Day celebrations in October which coincided with the start of Conservation Week. This was supported by a University of Otago volunteer student activity for our younger generation called 'Get Kids into Nature'.

The on-going collaboration with the University of Otago Botany Dept has entered its second year with another successful 'Summer School' programme - BTNY 303 - 'Topics in Field Botany' where staff were involved in delivering several of the practical components. Last year there were 18 students, this year there were 29. A week long programme two days were spent in the Botanic Garden.

In November the third of the four planned nation-wide Ex-situ Plant Conservation Strategy workshops was held at the Botanic Garden with 20 attendees from Otago and Southland with support of colleagues participating from Wellington BG and DOC's Auckland office.

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Wellington Botanic Gardens

Spring Festival finished with the public opening of the Discovery Garden and Kids Day Out – an explorers day for children and families discovering how we use plants along a trail that wove its way through the Botanic Garden and the Discovery Garden. There were over 1000 visits to the Discovery Garden that day and nearly as many the day following. It remained busy through the rest of the holidays and finally gained some respite with the return to school.

The end of the University and School years is an increasing challenge for us and we have considerable sympathy for the long suffering Dunedin Botanic Gardens team. Large drinking parties descend on the garden, and while not wilful, do cause damage, litter and disturb other visitors. They leave when moved on but both the costs and presence of security guards in the garden are escalating.

The cruise ship season is now in full swing with over 200,000 passengers expected in Wellington over this summer season. Already we are seeing steady flows of visitors through the Botanic Garden on ship days and an increasing number of these are visiting independently of the ship programmes.

Wellington Gardens database administrator Eleanor Burton was recently awarded the NZPCN 2017 Individual Award principally for her botanical illustrations but also for her volunteer work at Te Papa and her support for the Wellington Botanical Society.

Otari Native Botanic Garden

The Otari team had success at the NZRA Awards this year with a Facilities Merit Award. The team have continued the redevelopment of the Cockayne collections area of the garden to make it much more meaningful and interactive. They are working towards fulfilling Cockayne's directives for the development of the Garden of which the first is '...the arrangement must be one of beauty'. Once you have ensnared your visitors with beauty then the real work begins! And congratulations to ABG for their Outstanding Facility Award!

The Otari team have recently been to Marlborough and Nelson seed collection for the New Zealand Indigenous Flora Seedbank. They have recently signed an agreement with Massey University to hold a satellite seedbank at Otari. The signing of the memorandum of understanding between BGANZ and the Department of Conservation looks as if it will be a significant step towards streamlining and facilitating seed collection and shared threatened species plant restoration programmes.



Earthquake repairs to Bolton Street Cemetery have been completed. Two obelisks shifted on their plinths and became very dangerous and another two memorials fell and shattered. Also completed was a small but unusual project to create an unknown memorials garden on the surface of the mass grave where burial remains from the motorway cut in the 19060's are held. Many of the parts of memorials and grave surrounds have been sitting in storage and a number of there which were known to have been removed but aren't associated with any the reinstated memorials elsewhere in the park. This has been a great project carried out in partnership with the Wellington Gardens team and the Friends



Hamilton Gardens

The current development programme is entering its final phase. The new information centre, offices and destination playground are complete.

Work is progressing on New Zealand’s first ‘Changing Places’ toilet for those caring for high dependency people.

Work will start on the new river jetty in May 2018.

Development continues on the four new gardens. The Concept Garden will open on

the 31st January 2018 and the Mansfield Garden in November 2018. The Picturesque Garden and the Surrealist Garden won’t be ready to open till later in 2019.

At the time of writing a debate was in full swing around introducing paid entry in the central area of Hamilton Gardens with a charge of \$25 proposed by the mayor. The intention is/was to generate income for further development and reduce peak time use when the gardens can become unpleasantly full.

Pukekura Park

Like many regions in the country, Taranaki has experienced a particularly wet winter which made it difficult preparing Pukekura Park for the annual Taranaki Garden Spectacular at the end of October.

The Christmas concert programme in the Bowl of Brooklands starts on 10 December. This year it features Cat Stevens who performs on the same night the Festival of Lights opens in Pukekura Park. We are also fortunate to have Dinofest at the Brooklands end of the Park in late December to early January and this is followed by Bryan Adams performing at the Bowl.

The festival of lights runs every night until 5 February next year.

At this stage the last major event on our programme is WOMAD. The onsite set-up for this starts in early March and Council keeps the public out of this area plus Brooklands Zoo over the two week set up period.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

BGANZ (New Zealand Branch) Autumn Seminar

Theme: Managing our Heritage Assets

Venue: Invercargill Botanic Garden

Date: TBC 2018

BGANZ (New Zealand Branch) Spring Seminar

Hamilton Gardens TBC November 2018

Theme: Funding Our Dreams (Generating income from our gardens and securing sponsorship aren’t necessarily the favourite parts of our job. But they are a way to secure the resources that will allow us to do the exciting stuff. 12 speakers in a fast-paced TED style seminar)

9th BGANZ Congress: Wellington October (2019)

10th BGANZ /VGCI Congress: Royal Botanic

6th Global Botanic Gardens Congress: Bec Stanley

I attended the 6th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in Geneva this year, funded by the Auckland Botanic Garden Friends Group.

Plant Conservation is more relevant than ever in the Botanic Garden world and this was the main theme of the congress. Susan Sharrock and Peter Wyse-Jackson highlighted this in their report linking the goals of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted in 2015. While the GSPC has assisted plant conservation there is frustration that it hasn't had enough impact. These authors are promoting the opportunities presented by the UN's SDG (which are expected to shape the actions taken by governments in the future) to clearly demonstrate the fundamental importance of plants for the survival and wellbeing of people. They hope this gives the GSPC a bit more profile to world governments and policies as well as influencing the next review of the GSPC. Their report, presenting how plant conservation actions contribute to the

achievement of the SDG, can be downloaded on the BGCI website: <https://www.bgci.org/files/GSPC/PC%20and%20the%20SDGs.pdf>

While there were many other stimulating talks at the conference another theme of note was the genetics of tree collections and the importance of wild collecting to increase the conservation value of tree in Botanic Gardens, and the importance of recording (and sharing) this provenance data. Many big gardens are re-focussing their acquisitions to mostly conservation e.g. Missouri BG where all new accessions are for conservation purposes. While as individual gardens we don't always have room for duplicate specimens of trees due to their size, we do if we think about it amongst gardens across the country and the world. It underscores the importance of records to do this. One day I hope is we all share a database to facilitate this much like the zoos of the world do with Specis360 which we heard about at a recent BGANZ seminar.

Myrtle Rust

On May the 22nd 2017 the New Plymouth District Council responded to a request from the Ministry of Primary Industries- MPI, to supply staff from the parks team to assist with the Myrtle rust response.

Staff gathered at the Civil defence building to be trained in surveillance protocol and procedures, how to identify the myrtle rust symptoms and were shown a PowerPoint on what plants were in the Myrtaceae family.

From this date 15 staff were rostered to assist with the surveillance team, working over a seven day week. Our 5 month involvement concluded in October.

The staff's expertise in plant knowledge quickly became a valuable resource within the surveillance teams, as some people working on the response had limited plant knowledge or just knew the common Myrtaceae plants such as pohutukawa, Feijoas and Guavas. Specialist staff were relied on to identify the Myrtaceae plants present on the properties, train others and direct them to search the identified plants.

Field visits took place at Pukekura Park so that the more unusual Myrtaceae plants could be shown to the teams. Including such plants as *Backhousia citriodora*, *B. anisata*, *Luma apiculata*, *Metrosideros elegans*, *M. nervulosa*, *M. bartlettii*, *Syzigium paniculata*, *S. maire*.

The Fernery and Display Houses proved to be a valuable place to be able to show such plants as *Thryptomene*, *Lophomyrtus* cultivars, *Astartea* and *Baeckea* amongst other Myrtaceae plants.

Local knowledge was also extremely valuable as most of the MPI response team consisted of people from outside of the region who were brought in to work on the response. Each day the teams were sent out with aerial photographs showing property boundaries, indicating the areas that were to be searched. Being able to use local knowledge to navigate around the countryside was very beneficial.

A 'back of an envelope' estimate of the potential cost of management across Wellington city for managing future removals of dead trees came to over \$15mNZD and without accounting for downstream costs of revegetation and land management.



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BGANZ—REGIONAL GROUP

Convenor's Report:

This year has focussed on cementing NZ Botanic Gardens role in conservation with the signing of an MOU with DOC, ex-situ workshops run throughout the country in Botanic Gardens, participation in MPI's Biosecurity working group, provided sponsorship to the November 2017 NZPCN workshop in Hokitika and made a submission made on the draft Threatened Species Strategy.

Department of Conservation MOU

In May BGANZ-NZ formally partnered with the Department of Conservation via an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on behalf of DOC by Director General Lou Sanson. It is a framework whereby DOC and BGANZ-NZ, and participating botanic gardens either individually or as a group *".....will seek to co-operate over a range of mutually important plant conservation matters to improve coordination, achieve more research, increase conservation capability and reduce transaction costs by increasing efficiency and effectiveness"*.

Department of Conservation Draft Threatened Species Strategy

BGANZ made a formal submission on the draft Strategy released by DOC in May. BGANZ were mentioned in the draft which was pleasing and recognises the relationships we have been building over the past few years. All submissions, including ours, are available online.

Ex Situ Conservation Strategy

On behalf of BGANZ-NZ and with The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network we have been working closely with DOC on the development of an ex situ conservation strategy which will set protocols for germplasm collection for the seedbank and also as accessions into living collections. A series of workshops have been held through the country with the last to be held in Dunedin in December 2017. This is watershed piece of work as it finally acknowledges the value that Botanic Gardens in New Zealand can bring to conservation of our native species both through our resources and through our expertise.

New Zealand Biosecurity Strategy 2025

David Sole has represented BGANZ on the national Biosecurity 2025 Strategy work group which is looking at identifying and mobilisation of people and assets to address biosecurity issues, to have trained and skilled people and integrating biosecurity into 'business as usual'. This is important work as Botanic Gardens are well placed to train people, and we also hold information on our databases and in living collections.

NZ Seed Bank Partnership

The arrival of Myrtle Rust in May this year has underscored the importance of a well-resourced seed bank to respond. Challenges for us as a group for the next year

are ensuring a member of BGANZ is involved in the Seed Bank steering group to ensure our role as back up seed storage facilities is represented.

BGCI

Karin van der Walt (Wellington BG) and Bec Stanley (Auckland BG) attended the 6th BGCI congress in Geneva, Switzerland. Of note was the direction to BG's by Peter Wyse-Jackson was the recent publication of the UN sustainable development goals which have clear links to the GSPC. Peter advised us to find out who our countries representative is on the UN biodiversity convention and ask them how they are implementing the GSPC in their country. Our contact is Danica Stent, International Manager at Department of Conservation (DOC) and I would like to seek consensus on how BGANZ might approach Danica to discuss this.

Wellington Congress 2019

Planning is underway for Wellington to host the next BGANZ congress in 2 years with the venue being selected.

BGANZ website

Emma Bodley and I participated in the online training for the new BGANZ website and are able to add content to it. At minimum I suggest we add reports such as this, as well as our newsletter but seek suggestions on other items to be added.

Scholarships /Funding

BGANZ -NZ has again funded, co funded or been a sponsor of the following:

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network Conference \$1,500

Karin van Der Walt - Wellington Gardens – Presenting papers the BGCI World Congress \$1,000

Young Horticulturist of the Year \$2,000

Grant for iwi(Māori) attendance to ex Situ conservation workshop

Two professional development workshops have been held in Christchurch (Nov 2016) and Wellington (May 2017)

Fundraising Programme

Staff from Wellington Botanic Garden and Auckland Botanic Garden attended the BGANZ fundraising workshops.

Sponsorship

BGANZ provided \$1500 of sponsorship to the November 2017 NZPCN workshop in Hokitika including support of the Welcome Reception for delegates, and one workshop. This provided visibility for us by being verbally acknowledged as well as our logo in the conference handbook.