

The Auckland Garden

Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends

December 2025





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**Contributions to the
newsletter are welcome**
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Images

Front cover: *Aulax cancellata*

Opposite page top left: Fuchsia at Geoffrey Marshall and John Hayward Garden. Right: *Micranthus plantagineus*. Bottom left: *Protea scolymocephala*.

Front and inside cover photos by Barbara Wheeler, except Fuchsia by Chrissy Bielecki

Cover story - New additions to the African Collection

With the planting season now upon us, it's exciting to share a few new treasures being added to the African Collection. Here are some of my personal favourites that I've introduced this season:

Bobartia

Sourced from Joy Plants, *Bobartia* has been a part of the collection for some time, but last year, I collected seeds from the three plants we have near Podocarp Valley, at the back of the collection. Several plants grew, and I'm now moving them to a more prominent spot in the middle of the collection for all to enjoy.

Bobartia belongs to the Iridaceae family and grows in small clumps, reaching about 1.5m in height. Its fine foliage might remind you of a restio, but unlike restios, *Bobartia* is topped with bright, buttery-yellow flowers. These flowers bloom continuously along the same terminal flower spike throughout the season. A few extras will make their way to the Growing Friends sale, so keep an eye out there!

Nerine pudica

While we often associate nerines with the larger, showier varieties that bloom in autumn, *Nerine pudica* is a more modest and reserved species. In fact, its botanical name, *pudica*, means "shy" or "modest," which is one of the reasons I prefer it over other species. *N. pudica* displays soft pink flowers, almost white. They are more tubular in shape compared to the reflexed petals of its relatives. I've planted this delicate beauty atop a rock for easy viewing when it is flowering in autumn and winter.

Ceratotheca triloba

Ceratotheca triloba, also known as the African foxglove, is an annual that I'll be collecting seeds from and planting throughout the collection. Keep an eye out, as you never know where I will pop it next! Despite its common name, *Ceratotheca* is actually a member of the sesame family (Pedaliaceae), not the foxglove family. The plant features tall, foxglove-like stems adorned with soft lavender flowers, all covered in a fine layer of hairs. I have a special fondness for this plant, as it's rare in New Zealand and boasts exceptional beauty.

Protea nana

Protea nana may be the only protea I'm mentioning in this roundup, but rest assured, it's not the only one that's been added to the collection. I adore *P. nana* for its unique qualities, I'm always drawn to the oddities! This small-growing species has needle-like foliage, similar to pine, and is capped with deep cherry-red flowers that hang down in tiny cups. If you look closely beneath the flowers, you'll see a golden, fluffy centre. I've planted it up high near the small umbrella rondavel, so if you're nearby, take a moment to peek underneath and discover this little wonder. We have grown *P. nana* before but like all proteas here it is short lived.

Berkheya purpurea

I was overjoyed to find *Berkheya purpurea* available at a nursery here in New Zealand, especially after discovering it online. At first glance, it might seem like a thistle, but be assured, *Berkheya* is unlike any thistle you've seen. From the prickly rosette, a

flower stem rises to reveal large lavender daisy flowers, similar to sunflowers. I was excited at the prospect at seeing it in full bloom, and now that it has flowered the wait was definitely worthwhile. This plant is also being used extensively in the South African meadow at RHS Wisley, England and incorporated into many of the naturalistic planting schemes we see in the United Kingdom and Europe.

Why These Plants Are Perfect for Our Climate

What makes these plants particularly special is their resilience during our dry summer months. While many African species can become weedy in our climate, the ones I've chosen are well-behaved and make stunning ornamental plants. As

our climate continues to change, it's more important than ever to incorporate plants that thrive with minimal care, especially those from regions like Africa, where many species are adapted to survive under challenging conditions.

These are exciting new additions to the African Garden, adding to a collection where you can be guaranteed to always find something in flower no matter the time of year. Two of my current favourites in flower now are *Aulax cancellata* (on the front cover) and *Micranthus plantagineus* (inside the cover). I can't wait to see how the new additions flourish in their new spots. I encourage you to come and enjoy them and the rest of the collection as it grows!

Pippa Lucas
Collection Curator

Protea nana



Bec's update

Connecting botanic gardens and indigenous Knowledge: a global shift reflected locally

Around the world, botanic gardens are evolving—not just as places of beauty and science, but as living landscapes that tell the story of humankind's relationship with nature. A key part of this evolution is recognising the depth of knowledge held by Indigenous people and the role this plays in addressing today's environmental challenges. Many gardens are embracing co-design and cultural partnerships that enrich their work and connect with more people.

This is additive work—enriching, sharing more stories, and building deeper connections. It calls for a mindset that values collaboration and reciprocity, ensuring that Indigenous knowledge and voices sit alongside science in shaping the future of gardens. At its heart, this is about trust, respect, and long-term partnership—creating spaces that reflect shared decision-making and shared care for the land.

Here at Auckland Botanic Gardens, we are proud to be part of this global movement. Our co-design process with Mana Whenua for the new property

Te Puna Raranga - harakeke weaving shelter



at 120 Hill Road is an exciting step forward. This phase takes time because it is about building strong foundations—relationships that will shape the garden as a legacy for generations to come. The time invested now is invaluable; it ensures what we create together will be authentic, enduring, and deeply connected to place. The involvement of the Friends' President is critical and highlights how community and partnership go hand in hand.

A recent milestone was the opening of the Pā Harakeke shelter at the end of October, led by Ngāti Tamaoho and gifted a name that Greg shares in his article

below. This moment was a celebration of collaboration and cultural significance woven into our gardens.

By embracing these partnerships, we join a global vision: botanic gardens as places that inspire appreciation and protection of plants within a rich cultural context. This is about belonging, identity, and working together for the health of people and the planet—and I look forward to sharing more about this journey in future issues of this newsletter.

Bec Stanley
Manager – Auckland Botanic Gardens

Te Puna Raranga - harakeke weaving shelter

New harakeke weaving shelter opens at Auckland Botanic Gardens

Auckland Botanic Gardens' new community weaving shelter — designed in partnership with local weavers — has been blessed and given the name Te Puna Raranga.

Te Puna Raranga is a dedicated space within the Pā Harakeke collection where harakeke weaving can be practised, taught, and celebrated.

The idea for a shelter came from the weaving community itself, who use the collection regularly. They fed back to Botanic Gardens staff their vision – to have a space to weave, learn, teach, and connect.

The shelter was designed by artist Dr

Richard Cooper. Lorna Rikihana carved the three pou figures while the pattern on the shade sail was designed by Te Atiwei Ririnui. Ngāti Tamaoho helped guide the tikanga for the shelter and gifted a karakia for visitors to recite before weaving. The blessing was led by Ngāti Tamaoho kaumātua Ted Ngataki.

Te Puna Raranga opened on 28 October, a date chosen to coincide with He Whakaputanga, the 190th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence by Te Whakaminenga (the Confederation of United Tribes) in 1835.

Pā Harakeke curator Angela Anstis said Te Puna Raranga provides weavers with a workspace that supports learning, respects tikanga, and connects directly to the plants they harvest.



Opening of Te Puna Raranga

The harakeke collection is one of the largest in the region, featuring a wide range of weaving cultivars from across the country. It is grown and cared for in partnership with local weavers. The plants are regularly harvested for raranga (weaving) and muka (fibre) preparation, ensuring the collection remains healthy and productive while sustaining traditional knowledge.

Local weavers worked with staff on the design of the shelter, giving feedback on furniture height, accessibility, and layout to make teaching comfortable and inclusive. The furniture has been designed to allow easy interaction between teachers and students, including those with access needs.

Angela says new plantings around the shelter will feature indigenous species used for traditional dyes. New interpretation panels showcase the colours that can be extracted from plants and lichens, using a colour wheel to help visitors explore and learn.

A public programme of workshops and drop-in sessions will start once the shelter is fully open. The long-term vision is for Te Puna Raranga to become a hub of activity — a living classroom where weaving knowledge can grow and flourish.

Greg Meylan
Visitor Services Project Coordinator

Andrea Wright - leaving for fresh pastures



When Andrea Wright started at Auckland Botanic Gardens it was 2004, three years before the Botanic Gardens turned 25 years of age. Andrea had been studying at MIT (Manukau Institute of Technology) for a Level 4 Certificate in Horticulture (Amenity and Nursery Production) where she gained the Top Student award. At the time, Andrea applied for a two-year Horticultural Trainee position at the Botanic Gardens as well as a three-month Student Park Ranger role at Hunua Regional Park. Andrea was successful with both applications and as the Botanic Gardens were happy to wait for her to complete the student ranger role, she

was able to gain experience in track maintenance, seed collection, visitor interaction and engagement before starting at the Botanic Gardens as a trainee.

During Andrea's trainee role, as she already had her Level 4 qualification, she was able to complete a Level 5 Diploma in Horticulture at MIT. Andrea is still grateful to the Botanic Gardens for supporting her through her Level 5 qualification and feels that "the Botanic Gardens [is] the best place to learn about plants and I was very lucky to get the job". Twenty-one years later, on 31 October 2025, Andrea left the Botanic Gardens destined for the new pastures of Hawera.

Andrea loves being outside, and this stemmed from her young life growing up on a farm although she never considered horticulture was a career and found her way into laboratory work in her early career. She loved gardening and was inspired by her grandparents' "amazing vegetable garden" and loved being in nature and tramping. It was her grandparents who encouraged Andrea to look at horticulture as they could see she enjoyed gardening. Andrea took the leap out of the lab and into horticulture.

As a horticultural trainee, Andrea looked after the trials and star performers plants which were in an area of the depot where they were grown and evaluated, out of view of the public. Andrea found the assessments she did with Jack Hobbs and Lynda Hallinan a great learning experience and it was fascinating to hear

all the different viewpoints that people had on plant evaluations.

Andrea was successful in being promoted to a collection curator role in charge of the African and Rock Garden until 2020 when she rotated out of the Rock Garden, kept the African Garden and took on Camellia and Spring Blossom Valley. Latterly, in 2022 Andrea rotated out of the African Garden and took on the Magnolia Garden. A career highlight for Andrea was receiving the Buchanan Award to spend three weeks at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden in 2007. Andrea worked alongside gardeners and curators and participated in seed-collecting field trips to collect material near the Cape. The areas they collected in had experienced a recent natural fire so when the collection team and Andrea visited, plants were regenerating with hundreds of species coming back in every square metre.

Kirstenbosch staff took Andrea to show her a programme they were doing going in schools within poor communities, something Andrea found to be inspiring. She was blown away with the research centre that was filled with many scientists undertaking research on native plants. While there, Andrea utilised the amazing reference library to research plants for a seed order to import seeds to introduce South African species to Auckland Botanic Gardens. Andrea is immensely grateful to the Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens for supporting opportunities like this and to attend conferences and training over the years.

Another highlight in Andrea's time at the Botanic Gardens was meeting the then Prince (now King) Charles and shaking his hand at the Potter Children's Garden

opening. Andrea recalls being told he would not have time to chat with staff, but he ended up being happy to stop and speak to each person as he shook their hands. She recalls he was personable and very interested in the gardens.

One of Andrea's passions has been training apprentices and students and seeing them progress in their careers. She enjoys passing on horticultural knowledge and skills, seeing people flourish and make horticulture their life-long career.

I asked Andrea what was one thing that would surprise people about her. She related that when doing her OE, she did a bungy jump off the Victoria Falls Bridge. Andrea said she used to be "a little bit adventurous when she was younger, not so much now as [she is] older and wiser". That adventurous side also saw her do a tandem skydive for her 21st birthday.

Andrea has lived with her partner Graeme on a 10-acre property near Ngatea for the past 9 years, making the journey to work an hour each way, something she finds unbelievable that she could have sustained for so long. While a new chapter awaits at their new half-acre property in Hawera, Andrea will miss the view from the Ngatea property – looking towards the Coromandel and up to Te Aroha, with the Plains in the foreground and hills in the background. She loved the quietness as the city noise evaporated into the countryside.

Andrea will miss the Botanic Gardens - the team, the people, seeing the different seasons progress, working in a team that all band together to help each other out. Like a family.

Andrea says she will leave with a piece of Auckland Botanic Gardens in her heart. The Botanic Gardens have been very lucky to have had the benefit of Andrea's passion, diligence and commitment to the work and roles she had, and she

leaves her mark on the Botanic Gardens for the people of Auckland to enjoy and be inspired by long into the future. Thank you, Andrea.

Barbara Wheeler
Curator

Tangled Roots: How Grasses Shaped Our World

Step into a story that stretches from the ancient grasslands to the lawns beneath your feet.

Our summer exhibition *Tangled Roots* reveals how a single plant family — the grasses — has shaped human life more than any other, and has changed the planet itself.

Through history, ecology, art and play, discover how wheat, rice, maize, and sugar fuelled civilisations; how grasslands gave rise to horses, antelopes and early humans; and how this deep entanglement continues today in everything from cuisine to sport.

Explore living displays and interactive

experiences indoors and out — meet Grassman, the living grass sculpture by UK artist Ashley Peever, take the grass trail, wander a *Miscanthus* labyrinth, take the Grass Personality Quiz, and encounter remarkable species from across the world's grasslands.

Workshops, talks, and family activities run throughout the season, from bamboo-flute making to yoga on the lawn.

Come and see how grasses truly shaped our world — and how we're still growing together.

On daily until
Sunday
1 March 2026
and it's free!

tangled
roots

Te Ara i Tāraia ai
tō Tātou Ao e te Pātiki
How Grasses
Shaped Our World

President's report

Kudos to all those who developed the new weavers' platform for the Pā Harakeke which opened with Karakia on 28 October. I encourage Friends to go and experience the elevated view of the harakeke which are now coming into flower.

At the Friends AGM the amendment to the constitution was passed unanimously. The Honorary Life Membership was deservedly bestowed on Rosemary Platt in recognition of her generous gift of the Platt Arboretum.

We also acknowledged the end of Viv Canham's term as President. A big thank you to Viv for her vibrancy, verve and energy in taking the Friends forward with a new constitution and engaging and involving the members by way of new activities and regular updates. Thankfully, Viv will continue on the committee as the Past President and it is reassuring that as the newbie President I can look to her for guidance. Thank you also to Deidre and Graeme who both retired from the committee.

The Friends Birthday Gift will be applied to new shelters and information boards in the dog off-leash area of the Gardens.

Laurence Speedy has been granted the Buchanan Award for him to travel to Australia next year to investigate children's education, garden design, function and sustainability and community connection.

The Friends are excited to announce that the Artist in Residence for March 2026 is Thomas Paster who is usually resident in Austria. Further details will be advertised in the new year.

Any members who think they would like to join the committee, please contact friendsofabg@gmail.com and come along to check us out at a meeting.

Almost the end of another year. Refresh and replenish by enjoying the Gardens in their summer guise and make a note to visit the Tangled Roots exhibition and the Grassman.

Cleone Campbell

Rosemary Platt elected Life Member

At the Annual General Meeting in October, Rosemary Platt was elected a Life Member of the Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens. The citation was prepared by Jack Hobbs.

Rosemary Platt (née Carr) was born on the Eyre Peninsula in western South Australia where she spent her childhood on the family sheep and wheat farm.

She attended the local Tumby Bay Higher Primary School; and later Muirden Business College in Adelaide, having decided it was much easier to travel the world as a secretary than as a doctor.

Rosemary met Graeme Platt at a Youth Hostel Association (YHA) meeting in Auckland in February 1965. Rosemary then travelled around the world before returning to Dunedin six days before their wedding on 28 April 1967.

When Graeme and Rosemary returned to Auckland from Dunedin in August 1967, Rosemary worked as a secretary. Her highlight position was working for George Beca and Sir Ron Carter in their rapidly expanding engineering company. Graeme worked for Elna Sewing Machines as manager of their Queen Street shop. On leaving Elna, Graeme sold furniture at Farmers in Hobson Street, then worked on a dairy and pig farm at Waimauku, before joining the laboratory of New Zealand Breweries in Newmarket.

While Graeme was working seven days a week at New Zealand Breweries they commenced growing natives on their Glenfield Road property which was just under half an acre.

When Graeme left the Breweries at Easter in 1974, they leased three acres Rosemary had found at 153 Albany Highway and they purchased the land shortly afterwards. They both had to believe, especially with a young baby, that their nursery venture was going to work as they received nothing but negative reactions and predictions from one and all. The first plant they sold was a kowhai for \$1.50 to the neighbour across the road from the nursery at Christmas 1974.

For the next twenty years Graeme spent much time away from home, sometimes making four or more plant hunting trips a year. While he was away, Rosemary looked after the business while also raising their two daughters Sherryl-Lee and Julianne.

After twenty-one years of operation Platt's Native Plant Nursery finally closed its gates in 1995, having made a huge contribution to the popularity of native plants throughout the country. Graeme was by then a horticultural celebrity, whereas Rosemary was not as widely recognised for her contribution. However, they were a team, and without Rosemary's support Platt's nursery could not have left the indelible mark it has made on our landscape and ecology.

It was Rosemary who found the 5.63 ha (14 acre) property at 81 Kyle Road in Greenhithe that is now the Platt Arboretum. When they purchased it in November 1983 it was a windswept valley containing little of value, but they recognised its potential.

They purchased the property as two adjoining titles. Initially, Graeme was going to buy only one title until Rosemary showed him the subdivided ex-farm. They managed to buy both titles by selling their Glenfield Road home and then living for 12 years in the cottage they had intended to demolish at Platt's Nursery.

The house (1994) and shed (1995) they eventually built at Kyle Road were also planned for research purposes with expertly selected, exotic woodlot New Zealand timbers used and no pine or native timbers included. The bricks were from the demolished His Majesty's Theatre in Queen Street.

More than 40 years later, Rosemary's gifting of this magnificent property is one of the greatest gifts ever made to the people of Auckland. The property will be protected as open space in perpetuity, and the land, trees and buildings will be cared for by Auckland Botanic Gardens. Importantly, the Platt family legacy will be preserved through it being known as the Platt Arboretum.

The more than 1,000 trees on the property are mostly descendants of species that existed in the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana and they have enormous conservation value. Additionally, there is a large stand of New Zealand kauri (*Agathis australis*) grown from seed from forest giants such as Tāne Mahuta collected by Graeme while suspended from a helicopter. The arboretum also has numerous selected forms of pōhutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*), and many threatened native and exotic species. Other special features of the Platt Arboretum include its tranquillity and layout, with a series of connected open spaces enabling visitors to fully appreciate the trees.

Rosemary first contacted me in February 2024 to tell me she wished to donate her property to the Gardens. I immediately realised its potential to deliver the benefits of a botanic garden to communities in the northern and western parts of our region who face a long drive to Manurewa. Throughout the long process to convince

Council to accept the gift numerous experts and officers visited the property. Everyone loved it and lent their support to its acquisition which was heartening and strengthened our resolve.

The enthusiastic response of the mayor and councillors who visited in October 2024 was most heartening of all. Rosemary made an instant connection with Mayor Wayne Brown, and I knew that day that we would achieve the outcome we wanted.

In December 2024, Auckland Council formally accepted the gift of the land. The journey to get there must have been exasperating for Rosemary, but she remained positive throughout and often concluded our numerous messages with "this will happen!".

Rosemary's gifting of the wonderful *Moo* was the perfect conclusion to this venture. Her generosity when gifting her property was further emphasised when she waived the Friends' offer of a significant discount on the purchase price of *Moo* in recognition of their support for the gifting of her land.

Rosemary is a remarkable person who I hold in the highest regard, both as a person and for what she has done for the people of Auckland, and for the Gardens. Rosemary Platt is a most worthy Life Member of the Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Jack Hobbs

The Growing Friends

The season is changing again, and as we transition into summer, that Christmas feeling gives a renewed sense of possibility. Our customers often request plants that remind them of much-loved people or places. It adds another layer to the deep pleasure that plants bring to the garden. Kind or well-meaning friends bringing plants as gifts is one reason why we may end up growing something we had no plan for. The advantage of filling our gardens with plants that bring back memories is that they return each year, which is especially joyful when the person whose memory they bring back cannot.

The Growing Friends focus on perennials that light up the flower garden over summer. Our favourites are *Alstroemeria*, *Penstemon* and this year ornamental and native grasses. The excellent exhibition, *Tangled Roots* sparked an interest in grasses in our customers as well as the Growing Friends. Apart from easy border plantings, grasses add interest on difficult sites where soil conditions are challenging, or coastal exposure gets a little bit too much. Grasses become a passion for some gardeners. Native grasses create a link to the New Zealand landscape.

Merry Christmas! Mere Kirihimete!

The Growing Friends

Botanical Art Worldwide 2025

The Wellington exhibition of Botanical Art Worldwide opened in the Wellington Botanic Gardens Tree House Gallery on 1 August and closed on 30 September. Attendance was good and three of the displayed works were sold.

As with the Auckland show there was an opportunity for visitors to vote for their

favourite work. The Wellington "People's Choice" was Sara Bissielo's *Leptospermum scoparium* - *Manuka, Dainty and Dense*. Sara will receive the \$250.00 voucher generously provided by Gordon Harris Art Supplies.

The exhibition is currently showing at the Ashburton Art Gallery and will close there on 7 December.

Spring Bus Trip

We stepped straight into a slice of heaven when we strolled through the gates of Puriri Lane@Addenbrook in Bombay in mid-November. Rising from among the roses St Hildegard von Bingen's songs wafted softly and there was her statue amongst the flowers. So she is the inspiration for this garden.

The numerous pink roses were opening and their perfume filled the air. There were irises and foxgloves and forget-me-nots among the roses and under the trees. Magnificent, seemingly extra-large rhododendrons were set amongst them.

Addenbrook - below and right



Colourful azaleas also featured. Various immaculate hedges kept everything in order as we moved from garden room to room. All the possible features were present. A picturesque lily pond complete with real croaking frogs, a thyme walk, enormous trees, a secret garden, rescue trees from the new Drury development, a nursery where you could buy plants. Too many features to mention.

We regretfully left; on to Joy Plants which is an authentic working nursery and the home garden of Terry, Pam and Lindsey Hatch. These people have lived and breathed plants their whole lives. There's a charming untidiness with an underlying order which the meandering hens complement. The trees are a feature and the clivias. Watch this space for new unforeseen clivias. Here there are many



Cleone Campbell with Jack and Sandra Hobbs' *Aloidendron barberae* (syn. *Aloe barberae*/A. *bainesii*)

specialised and heritage plants all well set out for purchase. Lindsey is especially helpful and knowledgeable.

Finally, we visited Jack and Sandra Hobbs in their very own home and garden where we were welcomed on that unseasonably hot, early spring day with a lifesaving glass of chilled bubbles and nibbles. Jack entertained us as only Jack can with a stroll around his rather individual but most attractive interesting garden. His is not a flower garden. It is a foliage garden with unusual shrubs, trees and ground cover all blending together so pleasingly. One could almost imagine it very suited to climate change especially with the imaginative use of many succulents.

There were those who had a wee nap on the drive back to the Gardens taking the very route Jack must have driven so many, many times.

Barbara Harvey

SCULPTURE IN THE GARDENS

Sculpture in the Gardens is back for the summer of 2026/27. Expressions of interest to exhibit in the biennial outdoor sculpture exhibition are being sought.

This exhibition provides an ideal opportunity to display site specific, large scale outdoor works in a public setting and have them viewed by over 350,000 people.

Visit sculptureinthegardens.nz for information.

Applications close 11 February 2026.

14 November 2026 – 28 February 2027
AUCKLAND BOTANIC GARDENS



**CALLING
FOR ARTIST
SUBMISSIONS**



Brought to you by



Friends Art Group

Well, another year comes to a close, and what a great year it has been for our members. It's been a very busy year with two opportunities for our group to exhibit work in the Visitor Centre gallery. Many of our group were selected again to show work in the second Botanical Art Worldwide exhibition and, of course, we have just completed our annual exhibition.

"Spring to Summer" proved to be a very popular exhibition with 22 artists showing 50 artworks in various media. Along with the usual watercolours, embroidered felted ornaments, a brooch in copper and a concertina sketchbook were on display, much to the delight of the visitors.

We had 14 sales of artwork and some cards and prints which was fantastic despite the exhibition being held for a shorter time than usual. Judging by the comments in the comments book, visitors were delighted with what they saw and enjoyed reading about the artists and their work. The exhibition, as usual is for all members, and a visitor wrote that it was great to see work by new artists as well as more established ones.

Our People's Choice Award was very successful too. Over 400 people took time to vote for their favourite artwork and the artwork with the most votes was *My Garden, Spring to Summer* by Maryke Spencer, very closely contested by *Snapdragon* by Philippa Dobson, *Hortensia- Hydrangea macrophylla* by Flo Pirotais and *Pittosporum Flowers* by Birgit Rhode – with only three votes between

them! Maryke wins a \$50 Gordon Harris voucher generously supplied by the Friends.

This is the first year that all our demonstrators have been members of our group.

We started off the year with Jennifer Duval-Smith running a Nature Journaling workshop. The concept of nature journaling is to encourage careful observation rather than producing beautiful drawings so it is a great way to get back into drawing after a long break.

In April, Linda Weight demonstrated calligraphy and took us through a simple style alphabet which could be incorporated into our nature journals.

June saw us drawing autumn leaves using soft pastels under the guidance of Margaret Routen, and I demonstrated how to make a myriad of green shades only using three colours in August.

Lastly, for our October meeting, Marie Kuru had us painting Halloween motifs on stones using acrylic pens – well it was 31 October after all! We had our last meeting on Saturday 29 November with our usual end-of-year shared morning tea and trading table.

I'd like to end with a huge thank you to those of you who make my life easier by helping organise our meetings.

Lesley Alexander 021 161 7070
lesley.alexander.smith@gmail.com

New Zealand spaghetti orchid

Taeniophyllum northlandicum

This diminutive, leafless, epiphytic orchid is a relatively new arrival to the New Zealand flora. It was first found in 2009 and identified as *T. norfolkianum*, which grows on Norfolk Island pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*), but has since been given its own name as a distinct species. It will only grow to around 5 cm across, and sports yellow flowers, c. 3 mm, in spring.

All members of the genus *Taeniophyllum* are leafless, and instead have green roots which can do clever, leaf-like

photosynthesis, despite lacking key leaf features like stomata.

I came across this plant first at the Auckland Museum Herbarium, which holds the type specimen that the name *T. northlandicum* is based. This specimen is on gorse, collected from a shed branch, and flowered in the herbarium shortly after collection.

The appearance of this orchid has prompted a lot of speculation. Can it truly be called a native threatened species? It has been assessed as "Threatened –

Orchid on feijoa branch. Photo: Joseph Knight, www.inaturalist.org/observations/259942389



Nationally Critical” but being so minute it is almost impossible to be certain of population sizes and range. So far it has only been recorded on introduced species – gorse, apple, feijoa and southern magnolia – even though one site is surrounded by extensive native forest. However, such a small green epiphyte is easily overlooked so its true host range may be hard to know. It is very possible that it is an unidentified Australian plant that has blown across the Tasman Sea, the suspected origin of many of our native orchids.

One of the only known sites is a private property in Northland, where the Auckland Botanical Society had lined up a fieldtrip this past January. The owner had spotted this tiny plant growing in his orchard, and we located several across mature feijoa and apple trees.

He had one feijoa in a pot nearby that the orchid had found a home on and generously offered it for donation to Auckland Botanic Gardens. I just had to

figure out getting a 3 m+ plant in a pot I couldn’t lift into my small hatchback and almost five hours drive back to the Botanic Gardens – I don’t think my suspension has forgiven me.

We have a huge diversity of host plants to offer this little epiphyte, and I’m interested to see if it will grow on Norfolk pines like its close relative.

Ella Rawcliffe
Botanical Records & Conservation
Specialist

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National Harakeke Collection

Manaaki Whenua Landcare National Harakeke Collection

Earlier this year, I visited Katarina Tawhiri, harakeke curator of the National Collection at Manaaki Whenua Landcare, Bioeconomy Science Institute, at Lincoln, Christchurch.

The Pā Harakeke at Lincoln is laid out differently to the one at Auckland Botanic Gardens. In Auckland we have our harakeke in groups of 3 plants per cultivar and at Lincoln they have their plants in rows. There are some lovely established native trees surrounding the pā harakeke as well.

The weavers that use the Lincoln collection must come by appointment only during the week - no weekends are available for them, whereas our Pā Harakeke is available seven days a week.

At Lincoln they have the entire Rene Orchiston collection on display. I took down a new cultivar, 'Whina Cooper', for the National Collection which we had been gifted. This is a plant that came from the Point England home of Dame Whina Cooper when she lived in Auckland, but she originally had brought it down from her Northland home. It is described by the weavers that have used it as being one of the best muka (fibre) plants they have seen. It was very exciting for me to be able to deliver this significant cultivar in person to the National Collection with the history and mana that Dame Whina Cooper has in New Zealand.

I learnt a lot by visiting the Lincoln Pā Harakeke. One of the plants that is in the Botanic Gardens collection, 'Parekoritawa' is a yellow variegated harakeke that has never looked any good – it has always been small and had inferior quality leaves. In Christchurch it's the most stunning, tall, glowing healthy plant you could find. It obviously prefers a cooler climate, so I am going to try moving the variety into a cooler spot.

At Lincoln, they are starting to see a lot more disease and fungal infections affect the harakeke with the summers getting a lot hotter. We have some of those diseases in Auckland so I was able to exchange ideas on how to help with managing the infections.

I also heard about a Dunedin group studying the harakeke gel which you get

when you cut the orange edge of the harakeke plants. Studies have been done on plants in Dunedin and Christchurch to see the quantity, quality and makeup of the gel. I suggested they add the Auckland harakeke to the study as of our warmer climate and it would be interesting to see how our gel looks compared to the cooler climate collections.

I was interested to learn that the top three plants harvested at Auckland Botanic Gardens are 'Kohunga' 'Taeore' and 'Makaweroa' and at Lincoln, Katarina told me her top three plants for harvesting by the weavers are the exact same cultivars.

Highlights for me were seeing a harakeke plant, called 'Goliath' which grows 6 feet tall and has huge wide leaves. It looks amazing but apparently is not very useful for weavers. I took home some kāretu or holy grass, *Anthoxanthum redolens* syn. *Hierochloa redolens* which can be used for weaving. Kāretu has a vanilla scent. A woven bracelet of this can be seen, and smelled, in the *Tangled Roots* exhibition at the Visitor Centre.

I was excited to learn more on the history of many of the plants that were given to the National Collection by families throughout the country who wanted to conserve what they knew to be special, a bit like we are doing with 'Whina Cooper'. An entire wall of kete made from each of the cultivars in the collection was stunning - you get to see what colour each one dries to. I liked this idea and would love to get a similar display on the walls at Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Visiting the National Collection was an awesome experience. There are not too many Pā Harakeke collection curators

in New Zealand and to share ideas and knowledge was great. I came away feeling that we are in a good place in our Botanic Gardens collection, with tikanga practices and with the recently opened Te Puna Raranga weaving shelter. Our Pā

Harakeke continues to grow in all aspects – harakeke cultivars, more community use and the increasing profile of the taonga we have at Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Angela Anstis

Rātā moehau

Ella Rawcliffe (Botanical Records & Conservation Specialist) and Emma Simpkins (previously Conservation Advisor for Auckland Council) met with Ngāti Kuri ki Tāmaki in late May to discuss the continuing work on rātā moehau (*Metrosideros bartlettii*) conservation. Another 228 plants grown in the Botanic Gardens nursery were handed over. At the

hui, the team brainstormed a volunteer monitoring and pollination programme of the rātā moehau growing at Auckland Botanic Gardens. This was set to commence early this spring, connecting Auckland-based Ngāti Kuri with their taonga species and advancing our understanding of this threatened plant.

Ella Rawcliffe

Hui to discuss work on rātā moehau conservation



Diversity of Possibilities

Diversity of Possibilities -
New Zealand Gardens Trust
Conference. Tāmaki Makaurau
Auckland, April 2025

The New Zealand Gardens Trust conference is the crème-de-la-crème of New Zealand garden conferences where public and private garden worlds intersect. Inspiration lies around every corner and every juicy morsel of plant and horticultural information is consumed with gusto. It is where old friends are caught up with and new friends are made. This year, thanks to the generous support of the Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens and Auckland Council, 10 staff from Auckland Botanic Gardens and Domain Winter Gardens were able to participate.

In this newsletter, we reflect on the garden visits which were to north and central Auckland gardens, and some of the conference presentations.

Gibbs Farm

On the first day of the conference, we embarked on a self-guided tour of the renowned Gibbs Farm, nestled on the majestic Kaipara Coast. Despite the blustery, rainy (drought-ending) weather, our hardy group, clad in gumboots and raincoats, pressed on to fully embrace the experience. The sheer scale of the sculptures and the vastness of the site and coast created a powerful impression, making a bold statement within the sweeping landscape. These monumental works can be admired both from a distance and up close, where their

immense size almost dwarfs the viewer.

I was struck by the large amount of planning and thoughtfulness that must be involved, not only in selecting and creating the sculptures but also in their precise placement. The sightlines across the farm are meticulously considered, enhancing the dialogue between art and environment.

Gibbs Farm has New Zealand's largest collection of large-scale outdoor sculptures, and gaining access to this private art sanctuary is always a special privilege. Visiting such extraordinary exhibitions is vital for inspiration and insight, especially for those of us involved in Sculpture in the Gardens, so I truly valued this opportunity.

88.5° ARC x 8 by Bernar Venet at Gibbs Farm



Other highlights of the day included the thrill of seeing real-life giraffes up close, enjoying a delicious picnic lunch, and connecting with fellow green-thumbed, conference attendees from across the country. The conversations we shared while wandering the collection added a wonderful social dimension to the visit.

Amy Pollard, Business Development & Events Organiser – Botanic Gardens

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Mincher Gardens

Despite the soggy weather, this garden was the perfect place to have the opening of this year's conference. Against a Georgian-style main house, the large open formal lawns were big enough to accommodate the conference attendees, a generous beverage marquee and many tables of the hotly anticipated rare and intriguing plants that are auctioned off to attendees.

This garden is in the style of a large, country-like English estate broken into a series of garden "rooms" or landscape features, all joined up with a main path that meanders through the 8-ha property. Large specimen trees and tree-lined avenues really set the scene and showed the foresight of structural tree planting when this garden was first developed in 1992.

I liked the heritage touches such as the large iron gates welcoming you into an impressive walled garden full of edibles or the small Victorian glasshouse from Government House, Epsom, that was rescued from demolition. Also impressive was the towering hedges of hornbeam and tōtara that guided you through the garden. There were skilful examples of

espaliered Manchurian pears, apples and persimmons. The contrast of the formal gardens slipping into the remnant native bush and stream abundant with birdlife added a magical element of reconnecting back to nature.

There is a real sense of "I wonder what is around the corner" and hidden delights in this garden, none more so than their latest development in the making: a stumpery. We got to see the beginning of what I'm sure will be a unique garden in time with small ponds, structural tree plantings and the most impressively large, upturned tree stumps waiting to be planted up. This garden is a highlight within the Auckland region, and I look forward to visiting again on a sunnier day!

Jeff Jones
Collection Curator – Botanic Gardens

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Omaio

Located on the Takatu Peninsula, Omaio is a peaceful and personal garden, carefully created by Liz Morrow over many years. Her strong commitment to native plants and sharing stories of the land is clear in every part of the garden.

I was especially impressed by the tall kauri and pūriri trees that form a natural roof over the garden. This canopy provides shelter and creates the right conditions for smaller plants to grow underneath. Around the cabin, Liz has used simple groupings of grasses, flaxes, and other low plants to create a calm and balanced look - a nice contrast.

The garden also includes art and natural materials, with winding paths that encourage people to walk slowly and



Moa sculpture at Omaio

take things in. It felt thoughtful and welcoming. I'd like to explore how this gentle and well-planned style could be used in our public spaces.

Omaio showed me that a garden can be both meaningful and good for nature. I see real value in bringing these ideas into places like Auckland Domain, where people and plants can thrive together.

Andrew Tuarae, Horticulturist – Domain Winter Gardens

The Barclay Garden

Robin and Simon Barclay purchased their land only seven years ago. Much has been done in that time to transfer the orchard property into a large well landscaped garden. Even though Robin had already completed a Diploma in Landscape Design at Unitec she encouraged her friend Andy Hamilton a renowned landscape architect, to add his expertise.

For the design, it was important to create an uninterrupted view of the rolling hills in the distance, that appeared like a painting. Together Andy and Robin created a plan that successfully made the main house feel secluded from rest of the large open-plan garden. Even the pool fence was well hidden by mass planting of *Miscanthus*. The large open plan garden was successfully laid out to appear smaller with separate gardens, other dwellings on the edges, and a large stream crisscrossing through the land.

To enter the garden, we walked through a small orchard then passed the well-hidden pool. A large vegetable patch filled with colourful dahlias and *Cleome* sits on the border, instantly caught my eye and I felt the need to investigate closer. Moving on from the vegetable patch was the uninterrupted breathtaking view of the rolling hills. A large stream with willows and other large trees drew you in, and following the zigzag of the stream you reach the enchanting “forest of knees” protruding above ground of the bald cypress – scientifically they are called pneumatophores. They are aerial roots that allow the trees to breathe when submerged in anaerobic conditions.

Large sculptures cause you to pause at various points around the garden. At the end of the bridge sits a sculpture of three large red and black feathers approximately three meters high. Each one is standing upright as if it is floating in a triangle formation. These feathers can be viewed at different angles, that show off what is a large garden full of different perspectives.

Justine Newnham
Horticulturist – Domain Winter Gardens

Brick Bay

Brick Bay offers a rare combination of art, nature, wine from its own vineyard, and nutrition from the restaurant. It's an experience deeply attuned to mental wellbeing. From the moment I arrived, the balance between these elements was striking. The elegant Pavilion set the tone for a serene, thoughtful visit.

A leisurely refreshment with wine at The Glass House Kitchen, jutting out over a calm lake, was a highlight. The fresh, seasonal dishes crafted from local produce paired beautifully with handcrafted wines, enjoyed while overlooking the wetlands and vineyard.

The Sculpture Trail was a journey of exploration. What a beautiful place to wander, take in the art, and enjoy the sounds of nature. The birdlife in the bush areas is incredible, and the kauri trees along the Kauri Loop are truly stunning. The art collection is a diverse collection of 60 sculptures, with most pieces thoughtfully placed to complement their surroundings. Clear signage added educational depth, labelling both sculptures and native trees creating a richer, more mindful walk.

Inspired by Brick Bay's seamless connection between creativity and nature, I now find myself looking at my own garden differently. I'm eager to introduce sculptural focal points that invite curiosity, reflection and subtle touches that bring art and landscape into quiet conversation. Brick Bay isn't just a destination—it's an experience that stays with us.

Jiae Park, Team Leader Horticulture
Domain Winter Gardens

Geoffrey Marshall and John Hayward Garden

As the large bus navigated the quiet suburban streets of Mt Eden and came to a stop outside a row of lovely villas, I eagerly leapt from the bus keen to discover what lay behind the one we were headed for. The entrance to the Marshall/Hayward garden is quite subdued although you can tell a gardener's hand and design eye is at work by the immaculate plantings that line the driveway.

On reaching the house, you walk towards the portal-like entrance. The line of us slowed to a crawl so I had the chance to admire a super combination of begonia and mondo grass in a narrow planting beside the house, providing a glimpse of perhaps what was to come. Once we finally made it into the garden proper, it felt like I was "in" a musical composition and at every point and corner a new instrument would play its part, either subtly or with gusto.

The garden footprint is small, but wow, there are so many plants packed into a small space. Geoffrey and John have made use of every space available to them, whether that's at ground level, on the house, in containers and in the canopy. The result is an idyllic subtropical oasis where you quite forget that you are in the middle of suburban central Auckland. Plants are layered expertly, giving balance to the garden and allowing it to sit well into the wider landscape. Groundcovers, climbers, perennials, shrubs, trees, palms, epiphytes – the diversity that exists in such a small space is enthralling, and to plantspeople is akin to being a "kid in a candy shop".

Standing tall against the bluest of Tāmaki

skies was the winter deciduous Brazilian tree fern, *Schizolobium parahyba* – such a striking plant. Next door was a tree new to me, Brazilian ironwood, *Libidibia ferrea* (syn. *Caesalpinia ferrea*) that has the most incredible mottled brown bark which, like that of eucalyptus, peels away to reveal the stunning white/grey trunk beneath.

A symphony awaits before departure from the garden. A mature pōhutukawa resplendent with intensive underplanting and epiphytes in the branches is majestic in all its glory. Staghorn ferns, bromeliads including *Tillandsia* species, orchids, ferns and many other plants join in creating the pièce de resistance to a remarkable garden that has given me inspiration for future development ideas of particularly the Palm Garden at the Auckland Botanic Gardens.

Barbara Wheeler
Curator – Botanic Gardens

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Urban Jungle

A visit to an incredibly unique garden with beautiful collections of palms, ferns, bromeliads, native trees, and a whole lot more to discover, Mark van Kaathoven and Gene Dillman welcomed us inside The Urban Jungle, Freeman’s Bay, Auckland.

Mark’s passion for plants, combined with a great care for the environment, has developed a style of gardening that could inspire the growing population of Auckland. Rainwater gets collected so the plants from the collection on the roof down to the lush diversity of plants through the rest of the property can have their water needs met.

Mark introduced us to the unique concept of “Sponge Gardening” where green

waste and branches are carefully layered. Outside the kerb area of the property Mark and Gene have extended The Urban Jungle to provide nutrients to the soil, kept moisture for plants (like mulch) and when planted in, created a solution for areas that may suffer from flooding.

As Auckland develops into a bigger city, we naturally see a sudden decrease in the number of trees and native vegetation around our city, causing new flood zones. The Urban Jungle is a great example of using plants and water conservation techniques to create a space where the environment benefits in so many ways. Mark collects rainwater to get through the drought of summer and creates a sponge-like system where rainwater collects from the roof via the plants and diverts any excess towards other channels of the garden where other plants also get watered.

An inspiration for most Aucklanders to create a space to cool down on a hot summer’s day, a green space for mental health and wellbeing, and a long-term solution for Auckland’s flooding issues. The Urban Jungle has given opportunity for mother nature to replenish and thrive once again.

Andro Santos
Horticulturist – Domain Winter Gardens

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Jacob’s Garden (Lava Cave)

Relatively rare around the world, lava caves are a geological feature of underground Auckland, and one is a unique focal point at Jacob’s Garden.

A nostalgic, early millennium-era planting of *Dracaena draco*, *Agave attenuata*, cycads and palms greet you at the front

garden. This transitions to a lush planting palate at the back with more palms, an array of ferns, impressive flowering *Medinilla* and giant *Strelitzia*.

I liked how they worked around the giant cave entrance in the ground by meandering a path around one way and building stepped levels on the other side to make it feel like a multi-tiered garden. There was a pool placed above ground rather than in, surrounded by bamboo and wooden touches and plantings encasing much of the boundary.

The surreal moment was entering the cave, and being plunged into a dark, cool world where the occasional light lit up the cave surface glittering with specks of “fool’s gold” (pyrite). Stepping back out into light and lush planting, you could almost imagine you were in Bali for a brief moment.

Jeff Jones

Collection Curator – Botanic Gardens

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Hollingsworth Garden

This garden in the leafy suburb of Remuera, central Auckland has interest from the front to the back of the property. The house sits further back on the land, with large trees lining the front near the footpath blocking out the traffic noise from the busy road. These trees also provide an ideal habitat for shade-loving plants with large foliage giving it a lush appearance. The garden follows the border of the property up to the house where there is a narrow path with plants above, and to the sides that give a secluded feeling. Under foot is mondo grass that grows between the cracks of the steps. Once at the top of the steps, a large planting of yellow-green bamboo

forms a hedge, acting perfectly as a screen from the neighbour’s driveway. The back garden is distinctly different to the front garden and has a serene feeling when you are in it.

A deck connected to the kitchen and living room of the second level sits at the same level of the garden. This deck has large pot plants and outdoor furniture. The garden has mostly orange flowering plants requested by interior designer and owner of the house, Melanie Hollingsworth. These colours replicate the colours in her kitchen giving indoor-outdoor flow. This type of design is also reflected in the secluded hedged garden area outside the downstairs bedroom. This time with purple flowers reflecting the bedroom colour.

Justine Newnham

Horticulturist – Domain Winter Gardens

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Presentations

After two days of garden visits, we were ready to settle into the presentations indoors. Two inspiring talks captivated the audience, covering an introduction to the tips and tricks for green roofs by Dr Robyn Simcock, and the process of photography as seen through the lens (excuse the pun!) of Juliet Nichols.

Gardening above the ground: a diversity of possibilities

Dr Robyn Simcock is a prominent researcher specializing in the study and development of living roofs. She has been instrumental in evaluating appropriate plant species and has even conducted trials in the Children’s Garden at Auckland Botanic Gardens, where she assessed

various native and exotic species.

So, why start a living roof? One of the biggest reasons is stormwater management — living roofs can soak up around 66% of annual rainfall, helping to reduce flooding and take pressure off old drainage systems, especially in cities like Auckland. They're also great for boosting biodiversity. Dr. Simcock found that plenty of native New Zealand plants can thrive on rooftops (*Austrofestuca littoralis*, *Selliera radicans*, *Leptinella dioica*, *Coprosma acerosa*, to name a few), creating habitats for birds, insects, and other wildlife right in the middle of urban spaces. Native plants are less likely to become weeds off the roof and more likely to provide that uniquely New Zealand habitat.

Green roofs help keep buildings warmer in winter and cooler in summer, which is a big plus for energy efficiency — especially in homes that aren't always well insulated. They also help reduce the urban heat island effect — those pockets of extreme heat caused by concrete and asphalt. With climate change bringing more unpredictable weather, these roofs offer a practical way to make our cities more resilient.

Excitingly, Simcock focuses on using local plants and materials, so her work is tailored to our unique environment — making green roofs a smart and sustainable option for Aotearoa. She even challenged us to start small by making our very own mailbox green roof!

Some helpful tips when considering a green roof:

- Plants sourced from exposed, dry sites are more likely to perform well on a green roof.

- Start plants in containers that will then fit straight into the roof trays.
- Establishment is the most critical phase – watering and weed control.
- Use lightweight, well-draining substrates.

Morgan Crecelius
Horticulturist – Botanic Gardens

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Garden Photography-Observations and Considerations

Listening to Juliet Nicholas, the acclaimed New Zealand garden photographer, share her passion for photography was an undeniable highlight. Juliet began by recounting her journey, which started at the age of seven when she was gifted a Box Brownie camera. From that moment, her fascination with capturing the world through the lens was ignited. She described her deep appreciation for photography's unique ability to transform life in three dimensions into a flat, two-dimensional image—a literal snapshot of a fleeting moment in time.

Juliet went on to explore the fascinating historical connection between plants and photography. As it turns out, plants have been a favoured subject of photographers since the dawn of the medium. Their stillness, combined with a variety of shapes and tones, made them ideal for early photographers, who didn't have the luxury of modern technology or fast shutter speeds. The British inventor of photography, Fox Talbot, was himself an avid plantsman and recognized the value of photography in accurately documenting botanical specimens. Many renowned photographers throughout history, including Edward Weston, Ansel

Adams, and Robert Mapplethorpe (known for his provocative floral arrangements), also turned their lenses to the beauty of flora, landscapes and the natural world. The work of these historical masters could provide valuable inspiration.

When discussing what makes for good garden photography, Juliet explained her process. She begins each session with a tour of the garden alongside its owner, then spends time walking alone, taking in the garden's atmosphere before even touching her camera. She emphasized the importance of considering several key factors when composing a photograph:

Light

Light, Juliet explained, is one of the most critical elements in photography. She described how different types of light—autumn's warm and rich glow, winter's soft and milky light, summer's bright, blue intensity, and the diffused light on cloudy days—can dramatically influence the mood of an image. She pointed out that New Zealand's light, unimpeded by pollution, is particularly strong and beautiful, and it varies by region. For example, early morning and evening light has a warm, dimensional quality, while midday light is stark and hard, making it ideal for emphasizing form and structure. As George Eastman famously said, "Light makes photography. Embrace light. Admire it. Love it. But above all, know light. Know it for all you are worth, and you will know the key to photography."

Narrative

A strong garden photograph tells a story. Juliet recommended that a good garden narrative should include a variety of perspectives—wide, middle, and close-up shots—to capture the full breadth of

the garden's beauty. A diverse selection of lenses, including wide-angle and telephoto, can help convey this narrative effectively.

Composition

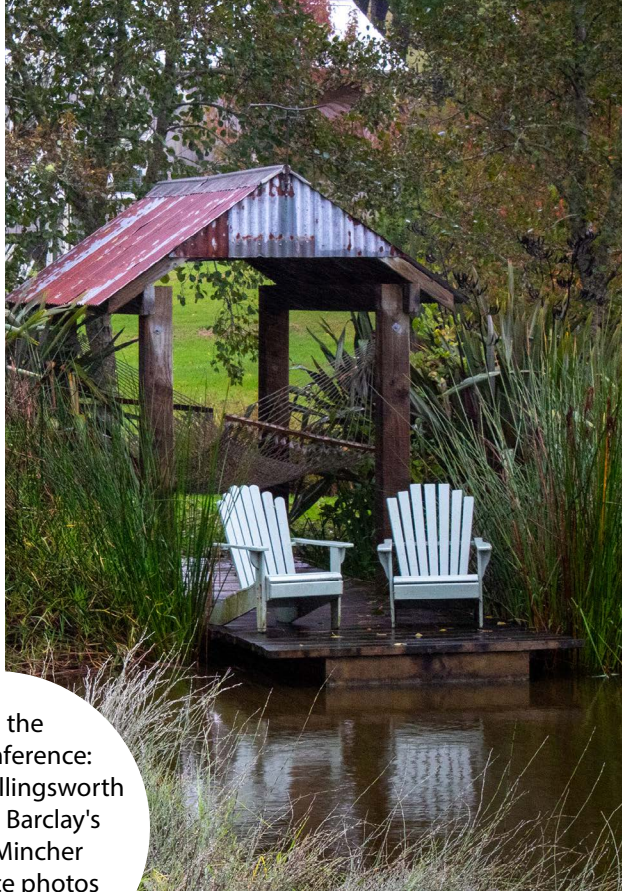
When it comes to composition, Juliet stressed the importance of being mindful of what you include in the frame. She encouraged photographers to experiment with portrait and landscape orientations and to use lines—whether axial, linear, or oblique—to guide the viewer's eye. The rule of thirds, both horizontally and vertically, should be applied not just within the image itself, but across the foreground and background. The vantage point from which a photograph is taken is equally important—consider whether the shot should be taken from a high, mid, or low angle.

Depth of Focus

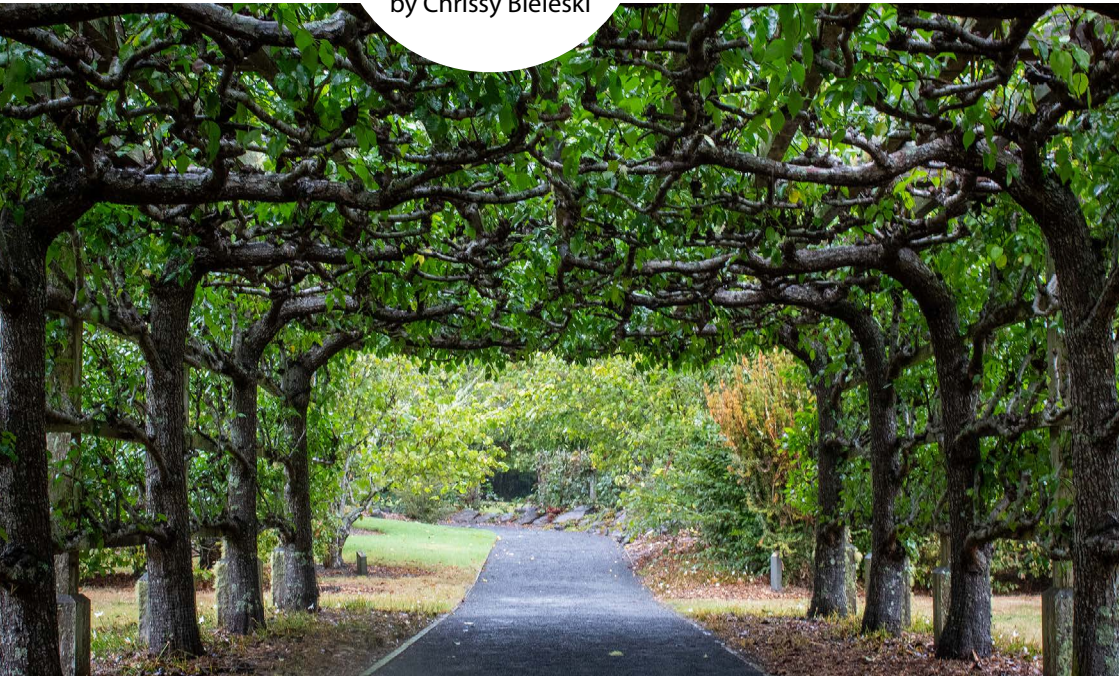
Juliet also discussed the concept of depth of focus—whether to keep the entire scene in sharp focus or to blur the background while highlighting a particular element in the foreground. This choice can add emphasis and create a more dynamic composition.

Finally, Juliet offered a key takeaway: visit your garden often. Gardens are ever-changing, with new moments and moods presenting themselves each day. By spending time in the garden and getting to know its nuances, you'll be better equipped to capture its essence. After all, a single photograph freezes only one moment in time, but a garden is always evolving, offering countless opportunities to tell its story.

Chrissy Bieleski
Horticulturist – Botanic Gardens



From the
NZGT conference:
Top left - Hollingsworth
Top right - Barclay's
Below - Mincher
Conference photos
by Chrissy Bielecki





Dainty and Dense

A watercolour of manuka *Leptospermum scoparium* by Sara Bissileo ©
 Winner, People's Choice at the Wellington exhibition of Botanical Art Worldwide 2025



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