

# The Auckland Garden

Newsletter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Friends

March 2018



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Front cover image: Suzy Abbott's *Phormium tenax* exhibited as part of the Botanical Art Worldwide © Suzy Abbott.

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The  
Auckland Garden  
is the quarterly  
newsletter of the  
Auckland Botanic  
Gardens and Friends

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# Jack's update

At long last development of our overflow carpark has commenced. Construction officially began on Wednesday, 7 February and we expect completion by August although weather conditions may have an impact. Works take place from Monday through to Saturday between 7 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

The development will have significant impact on our visitors as well as our everyday operations. However it will all be worthwhile as the new car park will provide an additional 175 spaces on top of the 163 spaces in the main car park. The overflow carpark will only be opened when the main car park is full.

Some areas and paths will be closed at times during construction, especially affecting the road between the Herb Garden and Katote Close entrance. Alternative path routes will be posted in the visitor centre as well as on signage in the Gardens. Traffic warning signs have been placed along the Loop Road at garden entry points.

Top soil from the overflow car park development is being stored in a fenced off area in the Event Site. When car park planting commences some of the soil will be returned to garden beds in the new carpark and the remainder will be spread

in the Event Site to renovate lawns and prepare future planting sites for trees.

Our two main upcoming events, Elvis in the Gardens (4 March) and Eye on Nature (10 – 13 April, family day Saturday, 14 April), will both proceed but in the central lawn rather than in the Event Site.

The Growing Friends have indicated they will not be selling plants from their nursery site once the access road is closed. The Wiri Rambler will also be affected. It is likely the Herb Garden and African Garden will be closed for several weeks while works take place nearby.

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience, and we hope the benefits of the new carpark will make everything worthwhile.

If you have any further questions or wish to sign up for email updates please email [kate.mcgee@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:kate.mcgee@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) and she will ensure you receive any updates.

Kate McGee is covering for Tash Salt who is on parental leave. A brief profile of Kate appears later in this Newsletter.

Yvonne Baker will also be taking parental leave shortly. It has been

wonderful having Yvonne in our part-time trials coordinator role, and we wish her well for the arrival of Ben's new sibling.

Sculpture in the Gardens has again drawn a large and interested audience. *Strange Fruit* attracted noticeable interest, mainly from those who had some connection to the estimated 4,000 servicemen who served in the Vietnam War. Many travelled long distances to visit this work, and to remember

those who served our country with little recognition or compensation for the sacrifices they made. A separate article in the Newsletter describes the responses of some of the visitors.

As always there was some sadness when the exhibition ended on 25 February, but we are grateful to have John Edgar's beautifully crafted *Font* as a lasting reminder of our sixth Sculpture in the Gardens.

Jack Hobbs

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## Outstanding Park 2017

Last year, the Auckland Botanic Gardens won the New Zealand Recreation Association's Award for the Outstanding Park 2017. The Friends want to congratulate the Gardens management and staff on this great achievement. It is always gratifying to see their efforts appreciated, but perhaps more important, the award is another independent judgement on the extent to which the aims of the Gardens are being met.

A shortened version of the nomination, prepared by the Gardens staff, provides a useful and comprehensive summary of what are considered the core objectives for the Gardens: in particular, how to combine being a botanic garden and a popular park appealing to the

community. It outlines the reasons for many of the strategies adopted – probably not obvious to most visitors.

The headings are from the NZRA guidelines for nominations.

*Innovation: Demonstrate how the nominated activity or facility shows innovation and efficiency or improvement over antecedents.*

This nomination is for Auckland Botanic Gardens (the Gardens) to be recognised as a community park with high recreational values as well as an effective botanic garden. The primary botanic garden role is to display documented collections, with more than 10,000 different plant groups from around the world that support

the education, conservation and research programmes. The Gardens' strapline "Where Ideas Grow" indicates the desire to positively influence the community. However, the Gardens are also widely used by the community as a park: their ongoing popularity and success are largely determined by the quality of the recreational experience. Visitor numbers have increased from around 365,000 in 2005 to nearly one million in 2016.

Here are the key initiatives over the past fifteen years that have transformed visitor experience and enabled achievement of the Gardens core objectives.

*Strategic planning based on market research:* In the early 2000s market research indicated that there was a perception in the broader community that the Gardens were formal and somewhat static, that they were a place where visitors looked but did not touch, and that they were mainly for older people and not an appealing destination for children.

*Implementation of a marketing plan:* The Gardens Marketing Plan has informed most business planning at the Gardens for the past fifteen years. This is uncommon for a botanic garden. The Gardens must attract a wide cross section of the community since the prime aim is to engage people with plants and gardens and through this enhance their lives and health. This enables

the effective delivering of important environmental messages.

*Community event strategy:* Organized events encourage the number and diversity of visitors, and they increase the Gardens profile and overcome minimal marketing budgets. Such events include Sculpture in the Gardens (300,000+ visitors), Eye on Nature (9,500 visitors), and Dinosaurs (33,000 registrations), all in collaboration with external partners and requiring relatively small Council contributions.

*Visitor Centre:* Huakaiwaka, the visitor centre, was opened in 2005. It engages visitors immediately on arrival. Reception staff can answer questions or give advice and there are displays conveying key messages. The building uses rainwater for the toilets and the water feature, and it was designed using best practice sustainability principles. There is a good café and clean toilets, both high priorities for visitors. In September 2005 the visitor centre received the Creative Places Award for Best Built Environment.

*Public art:* The permanent collection of 21 sculptures by many of the country's leading artists has added to visitor enjoyment and wayfinding, and attracted a different demographic to the Gardens.

*Reconfiguration of plant collections:* Traditionally botanic gardens have organised plant collections in

taxonomic arrangements to facilitate their requirement to document their collections. The Gardens have progressively changed most plant collections to optimise their aesthetic appeal while still maintaining proper documentation.

The Rose Garden was once a monoculture containing 6,000 roses that was regularly sprayed with insecticides, fungicides and miticides. In 2000 it was transformed into several themed display gardens containing roses and companion plants and the spray programme ceased. The Threatened Native Plant Garden, opened in 2001, highlights the plight of many threatened plant species. It is the first garden of its type and widely considered to be an exceptionally innovative and effective garden. Native Plant Ideas highlights the best native plant cultivars for use in Auckland gardens. It has several

themed components including a colour-themed border, subtropical garden, coastal garden and an inner city courtyard. The Potter Children's Garden, opened in 2005, is a direct result of the marketing plan objective targeting the interests of children. It is used for curriculum-based environmental education programmes.

*Pesticide minimisation:* In the early 2000's a pesticide minimisation programme stopped the use of insecticides and fungicides. Despite initial industry doubts, the Gardens have continued to present high quality displays of healthy, attractive plants. The Gardens have remained at the forefront of promoting 'sustainable horticulture' to the public and the horticultural industry in New Zealand. This includes recommending plants that perform well in Auckland without spraying,



and promoting techniques that enhance plant and soil health.

*Stormwater management:* The Gardens have become a showcase for devices and associated plantings based on water sensitive design (WSD) that treat stormwater and underpin education programmes.

*Community Engagement: Detail the level of community involvement and meaningful engagement within the development or operation of the nominated activity or facility.*

For several years there have been almost one million visitors annually making the Gardens one of Auckland's most popular destinations. A broad cross-section of the community visit with different ethnicities and age groups well represented.

The Friends of Auckland Botanic Gardens actively support the Gardens through project collaborations, financial assistance, events and provision of volunteers. They are aligned with the values and

strategic direction of the Gardens in what is recognised as a positive and mutually beneficial partnership.

Survey information from 2012 indicated that half the visitors came for botanical or environment-related reasons and the others for social and recreational purposes. Following this survey the Gardens placed increased focus on uptake of key plant and environmental messages rather than on just increasing visitor numbers.

*Display themes:* Four environmental themes are highlighted each year via a visitor centre display, signage, digital app support and social media messaging.

*Website:* The Gardens website is the primary resource for visitors seeking information about their pending visit, and it also provides gardening and plant selection advice as well as other key messages. Page views have increased from 381,000 in 2015/16 to 479,000 in 2016/2017, and in the current financial year they are trending 10% higher.



*Community workshops:* Horticultural advice is provided through free Drop 'n' Learn sessions (one or two per month), garden advice leaflets, on site signage, plant identification service and videos.

*Event partnerships:* Partnerships are used to deliver events that convey key messages about plants, gardens and the environment.

*Accessibility:* The Gardens have worked for more than five years with 'Be Accessible' to improve physical access throughout the site as well as broadening access to information. This has included development of site brochures in several foreign languages, audio guided tours, and facilitated workshops for the visually impaired and children with access challenges.

*Volunteers:* Many of the public activities are supported and delivered by volunteers at the Gardens, totalling a contribution of around 7,000 hours per year. Volunteers provide the Wiri Rambler guided tour service, library access and plant sales plus assistance with horticultural and event activities. They also provide valuable feedback and act as ambassadors.

*Excellence: How does the activity/facility demonstrate overall excellence and industry leadership? How does it provide the capacity for a case study for other agencies or bodies?*

The Gardens use external accreditation agencies to provide feedback on the quality of the products and services delivered to the community. These include Qualmark who assess the Gardens under their Sustainable Tourism Business criteria, New Zealand Gardens Trust who evaluate the gardens from a visitor perspective, and Be-Accessible who assess the quality of physical and information accessibility.

The success of the pesticide minimisation initiative is based on plant selection and effective horticultural practices. Plant selection is based on trials that are assessed against criteria that determine the best plants for growing in Auckland conditions. These include best edible plants, annuals, perennials shrubs and trees. This trial approach could be replicated in many parts of the country.

The initiative to identify the best plants for application in various stormwater devices is another programme that could be replicated elsewhere. The site is used by stormwater management professionals for workshops, and the Gardens sustainability trail is widely used by school groups and general visitors.

The Gardens nursery was one of the first to receive accreditation under the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme.



Each year the Gardens host the annual Young Horticulturist of the Year finals, and the staff have played an active role in judging and promoting young emerging industry leaders. Three staff from the Gardens have won the Young Horticulturist of the Year Amenity Sector competition, two of them have placed second in the national finals and one has placed third.

*Achievement: How well does the activity or facility achieve the goals, outputs and results that were projected or anticipated? Usage, user satisfaction, outcomes and accessibility (in its widest sense) are prime criteria.*

Surveys are used by the Gardens primarily to measure success and inform future planning. Satisfaction surveys are conducted annually and indicate satisfaction levels in excess of 95% over the past 10 years. Satisfaction with facilities and park settings are also consistently above 90%. Targeted visitor research, feedback and observations are also used to inform business planning and activity provision.

The high quality of the gardens and plant collections is recognised by the New Zealand Gardens Trust which has awarded the Gardens a five star rating in recognition of horticultural excellence and the quality of the experience from a visitor perspective.

Qualmark have awarded the Gardens a Gold rating in recognition of their excellence in sustainability and business.

Be-Accessible awarded the Gardens with a Silver rating at their most recent audit in recognition of the proactive implementation of recommendations from previous audits.

*Sustainability: Is the activity/project/programme/facility sustainable in the medium or longer term? Consider 'sustainability' in its widest sense to the development and on-going implementation. Report on all elements that are relevant; financial, environmental and social sustainability.*

The Gardens have emphasised both environmental and financial

sustainability, and are regarded as one of the Auckland Council's centres of excellence for showcasing best sustainable practice. Sustainable garden practices such as pesticide minimisation and water sensitive design have been adopted. Alternatives to agrichemicals are used to control pests and diseases and companion plants, mulching and correct spacing also assist with sustainable horticultural practice.

Almost 7000 volunteer hours are provided annually helping to deliver

a high quality visitor experience. Volunteers can participate in a diversity of activities according to their skills and personal interests.

Several of the Gardens key activities are funded primarily externally, and over many years a "family of supporters" committed to the Gardens programmes and values has been established. This inspires confidence that programmes, events and activities valued by the community can be sustainably delivered in the years ahead.

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# What's on at the Gardens

## February - May 2018

This summer we've seen happy hordes of visitors thanks to the Sculpture in the Gardens exhibition. It's been a fabulous time and we've enjoyed all the visitors and stories they share with us. We'd like to thank all the amazing Sculpture in the Gardens volunteers for their hard work over the summer, as well as our regular volunteers throughout the site for keeping everything looking great and functioning smoothly.

We've got a great line-up of gardening workshops and events this year. The first workshop was in February, where Pippa Lucas (our Perennial Garden curator) demonstrated how to grow your own cut flowers.

February was also a fantastic month for special horticultural guests. We hosted three botanic gardens professionals (from Chicago and Washington) and enjoyed an excellent talk by a visiting horticulturist from Chanticleer Garden in Philadelphia for the Friends and Auckland Botanic Gardens staff. These visits are always a great time of learning and knowledge sharing, and it's thanks to the Buchanan Award that Julia Watson met these professionals and was able to invite them to spend time with us here at the Gardens. Special thanks to the Friends for sponsoring the Chanticleer talk.

From March to June 2018 you'll see our new display in the visitor centre. This display incorporates two elements – a focus on the plant conservation stories of our Threatened Native Plants Garden, as well as a beautiful display of botanical art to celebrate the Worldwide Exhibition of Botanical Art 2018. The Friends have organised the botanical art exhibition and it's a real privilege that the exhibition will be held here at the Gardens first. It will then travel to other sites in New Zealand.

We'd also like congratulate Tash Salt on the birth of her son Harley. Tash is now on maternity leave, so we welcome Kate McGee who is covering Tash's role. Kate has

previously worked in Auckland Council as well as in several event management roles. Please say hi to Kate when you see her.

Julia Watson

Introducing Kate McGee



Here are some upcoming events:

March:

- 4 March - Elvis in the Gardens
- 18 March - Totara Hospice Sunrise Walk

April:

- 11, 12, 13 April - Eye on Nature school days,
- 14 April - Eye on Nature Family Day

May:

- 27 May - BGANZ Open Day

There are also workshops coming up including:

- saving your own vegetable seeds
- gardening in small spaces
- hedges and screening plants
- weed control
- gardening with native plants
- harakeke cultural uses
- a conservation walk

The dates to be confirmed so watch your email inbox for monthly event updates, or go to: <http://www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz/whats-on>

# From the President

Visits to the Gardens this summer have been varied, taking with me a Mexican visitor who was delighted with all the sculptures and insisted on seeing all the permanent as well as the exhibition ones, to a second visit with my ten-year-old grandson, Lee. He had seen all the permanent ones on a previous visit, so when he was staying with me for a few days over the holidays, he begged

Dianne's grandson Lee admiring  
*Strange Fruit*



me to take him and see the current exhibition ones. Have you taken a child to an art gallery or to any art exhibition? In my previous life as an art and craft teacher, I took many teens to view the arts as part of their education – from Māori arts in the Auckland Museum, and Aboriginal arts in the Auckland Art Gallery, to the classical arts in various galleries. But taking a younger, art-naïve child is another type of experience.

Young children do not have preconceived views of what art should be – there is an innocence to their questions and to their own ideas of each piece under scrutiny, and if we allow it, we can be the student, and the child the teacher. The sculpture of Wanda Gillespie, titled *The Master and the Teacher* ponders the same question ... “It is unclear who is teaching who, but I like to think the child is teaching the adult the innocence of slowing down and appreciating nature”. It reminds me of a time I took my then young son, nine-year-old Ashley, to the Auckland Art Gallery as a preview for a visit by my art classes. As I zoomed through the Gallery, he dawdled as he had a habit of doing. He had the catalogue in his hand, and he stopped in front of an oil painting, (from the catalogue which I still possess, I believe it was Renoir’s *Woman with a Parasol*, c. 1873), looking in turn at the painting

and then the picture in the catalogue with a puzzled look on his face. An elderly gentleman, who I recall was a docent, approached my son, and I thought he was going to reprimand him, but “no”, he gently asked what was puzzling him. Ashley asked him why the photograph in the book had lots of blue in it but the painting on the wall was very yellowish. The docent explained that as the painting was very old and as it aged, the oil that was used by the painter had yellowed. Now, why had I not thought of that? My son had taught me something that day – slow down and appreciate the art and what it can teach us.

Try this – take children with you the next time you visit the sculptures ..... or visit any art exhibition, and listen to their discussion and see if you can answer their questions. I appreciate the value of our curatorial team and others who have been leading groups through the Gardens. One of the experiences Lee found most stimulating was talking to Donna Turtle Sarten about her *Strange Fruit* – the others were listening to me talking to visitors who had stopped to view John Edgar’s *Font* and pointing international visitors to view James Wright’s *Ratiti Mya* in the Gondwana collection, with an explanation about the meanings of both site and sculptures. Sharing is caring.

Dianne Glenn ONZM, JP

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## Introducing some of the Friends Committee

### Dianne Glenn ONZM JP

Born in Tuakau to poultry farming parents who established the first commercial poultry industry in NZ, Bromley Park Hatcheries, my early childhood was dominated by chickens and rural life. My parents were persuaded to send me to Epsom Girls Grammar School as I “showed promise” but unbeknown to all, I was dyslexic which meant passing exams was difficult. However, I was determined to undertake my



childhood dreams of becoming a teacher and so undertook training to become a Home Economics teacher. I taught that subject, plus Science and Biology for many years, interrupted by marriage to David, birth of two sons and short careers in publishing and retail.

On return to teaching, to keep my grading, I had to undertake further education (by distance) to qualify with an Advanced Diploma of Teaching, but in art subjects, which previously had been only hobbies. At the same time, I managed 500 laying hens and a few beef cattle on a lifestyle block, while David was a manager in the family poultry industry and often away on export business. As a family, we spent many years following David who rallied motorcars, and the boys who raced motocross bikes. It was then time to look after my pursuits.

As a result of gender discrimination in the education system and family inheritances, I joined Business and Professional Women, founding the local BPW Franklin club with other like-minded women, seeking equity for women. I served as President of the Club before becoming involved at national and international level, elected to both BPW NZ and BPW International Executive Boards in turn, as President of BPW NZ and Asia/Pacific Regional Co-ordinator for BPWI. Through those years, I travelled widely to attend conferences with some touring

added on (as most kiwis do). In recent years, I have served on the National Council of Women (NCW) NZ Executive Board, promoting gender equality.

I gave up teaching in 1993 to manage Adult Community Education at Pukekohe High School and Tuakau College, both schools at which I had taught, and continued this until 2004. During this period I was elected to the Auckland Regional Council in 1998, and in 2004 was appointed as Chair of the Environmental Management Committee and the Resource Management Hearings Panels. It was partly through this work, including initiating the "0800SMOKEY" campaign to reduce air pollution from vehicles and the reduction of sulphur in diesel fuel, that I was awarded the Officer of the NZ Order of Merit. Following the election of 2012, when I was no longer on the Council, I was appointed to the Auckland Conservation Board. For many years, and through all of my roles, I have lobbied for people with disabilities, to gain greater access to improved services and equal opportunities within their lives. Family members with disabilities were my drivers, and through BPW and NCW, focussing on women with disabilities, I was able to be effective both at national and international level, establishing policies but also as an effective voice at United Nations. This was the other part of my ONZM.

My interest in the Auckland Botanic Gardens commenced when I was Deputy Chair of Parks from 1998 to 2001, with Bill Burrill as Chair. I attended all the Soup Days, etc. and had an open ear to Jack Hobbs to improve facilities at the Gardens. I was a strong supporter of building the Visitor Centre – Huakaiwaka. I was appointed to the Trust Board and

contributed to the 2009 Master Plan, inserting the proposed Epiphytium for future consideration. This is an ongoing action for the Committee and the staff; the main reason I joined the Friends Executive Committee was to pursue this. My current focus is to stage a successful Sculpture in the Gardens exhibition 2017, and to investigate a sustainable model for the future.

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## Liz Powell

I joined the Friends in the mid-nineties after attending one of the Sunday morning workshops on rose pruning and soon became involved in volunteering at the workshops and in the library. In 2000 I was asked to join the Friends committee and was elected President in 2006.

It was an exciting time to be part of the committee – new ventures were the introduction of the Wiri Rambler, the development of the Threatened Native Plant Garden, the Potter Children’s Garden, the building of Huakaiwaka and planning for the first Sculpture in the Gardens Exhibition.

I am currently involved with the Sculpture Exhibitions, the

upcoming Botanic Art Worldwide Exhibition, the Library Management Group, the Friends Painting Group, the Growing Friends Sunday sales, coordinating bus trips and Soup Day and the Visiting Artist Programme. As an enthusiastic back-yard gardener being able to draw on the skills and knowledge of the wonderful Gardens staff and Friends members and to have access to the library is a huge benefit. Meeting

Friends members at functions and in the volunteer groups is both fun and rewarding and it is a privilege to be part of an organisation that supports the Gardens’ management and staff to make the Botanic Gardens the wonderful asset to the city that it is.



## Heather Hine

Many years ago when my parents had a nursery in Patumahoe and a small plant shop in Pukekohe, I spent many school holidays working at both places, and vowed I would never be doing that again when I left school. How things change!

As an adult, I found that I really loved gardens and gardening after all. So when I retired, after spending the last twenty-five years of my career as a Medical Laboratory Scientist in the Haematology laboratory at Middlemore Hospital, I looked for new challenges. I live near the Botanic Gardens, and was spending lots of time walking there and enjoying the surroundings, so I thought I might as well do something to help. I started by volunteering at a Sculpture in the Gardens exhibition, and then guiding on the Wiri Rambler. Later, I was shoulder tapped to join the Friends committee, so I did, and have not regretted it. I now volunteer

in the Library, help with the school holiday programme, Sculpture in the Gardens, and other events, do rose deadheading, and still occasionally guide on the Rambler.

Volunteering can be a very rewarding experience, so if you are wondering what to do with your spare time, give it a go. The Gardens welcome new volunteers, and you might find it as interesting as I have.



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## Congratulations Fred Graham ONZM

Last issue we congratulated Mr Graham on being awarded the Te Tohu mo Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu | Exemplary Supreme Award at the 2017 Creative New Zealand Te Waka Toi Awards for excellence in Māori art. Two of Mr Graham's sculptures are at the

Botanic Gardens. Now, in the 2018 New Year Honours list, Mr Graham was appointed Officer, New Zealand Order of Merit. The citation reads:

"For services to Māori art. Mr Frederick Graham has been involved in New Zealand art since the 1950s

and has contributed to the growth, development and promotion of Māori art throughout New Zealand and abroad.

From 1951 to 1954 Mr Graham served as an art adviser to Māori primary schools throughout Rotorua and Northland. He has been the Head of the Art Department at various schools throughout the North Island and he has played a key role in inspiring and developing the next generation of artistic talent. He was a pioneer of the Contemporary Māori Art Movement and in 1966 he was a key figure in organising one of the first exhibitions of contemporary Māori painting and

sculptures in Hamilton. He has represented New Zealand at many international exhibitions throughout his career, including the 1986 'Te Ao Marama' ('Seven Māori Artists') exhibition that toured Australia and a 1992 tour of the United States that showcased contemporary Māori art. Since 1996 he has served on the Haerewa (Māori Cultural Advisory Group) at the Auckland Art Gallery. He continues to provide mentoring to young sculptors and artists. Mr Graham's contributions have resulted in a number of sculptures that are displayed in many New Zealand cities and towns, as well as galleries in Seattle, Vancouver and South Korea."



Fred Graham (left) and Rex Erickson, engineer who built the work, standing at the base of Manu Tōrino, the sculpture at the entrance to Huakaiwaka, the visitor centre. (Photo: Jack Hobbs). The inspiration for this work: "I was walking along an estuary when I saw a flock of birds on a sandbank suddenly spiral upwards", Fred Graham quoted in *Fred Graham: Creator of Forms: Te Tohunga Auha* by Maria de Jong with Fred Graham, Huia Publishers, Wellington, 2013

# Library volunteers

We are looking for three new volunteers to join the Library team on the following days:

- first Saturday of each month;
- fourth Wednesday of each month;
- fifth Sunday of each month- there are only four of these this year.

If you love books and helping people research plants, this could be the volunteer opportunity for you. The library is open five days a week from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wi-fi is available. Duties include shelving books, helping visitors to find horticultural information, checking shelves and answering directional visitor queries.

There is usually time to catch up on your own reading. Library volunteers all get together once or twice a year for morning tea, or volunteer famils.

Without volunteers, the Library does not open, and the visitors cannot access this wonderful resource. This can be disappointing to a member of the public who has made a special trip to the Gardens, only to find it closed. If you are interested volunteering, please feel free to contact:-

Emma Bodley for more information about the role or Julia Watson about becoming a volunteer.

[emma.bodley@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:emma.bodley@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)  
[julia.watson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:julia.watson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

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## Growing Friends report

Growing Friends have made the call to stop using plastic carry bags by the end of the year. We want to be part of the change leading the way for not using plastic. There are alternatives we can use. The main ones are either fabric reusable bags such as those supermarkets sell, or biodegradable carry bags. If any of the Friends have suitable bags of this type to donate we would be very grateful for help to start making changes. We would also encourage members of the Friends to bring their

own carry bags when you purchase plants. We still use plastic plant pots, but we reuse them.

Plant sales have been amazing over the last six months. The hot weather still didn't stop big plant sales. We frequently take wheel barrow loads of plants up to the main carpark for our customers. We are currently making well over \$1000 a month. The best plant sales we've made in over six years.

Thanks to all the ladies for their continuous hard work for Thursdays and Sunday sales. Also thanks to the ongoing support from all the team at the Botanic Gardens nursery. We are still getting a lot of donated plants. We would also like to thank the Botanic Garden curators for also donating new and dug up plants, along with letting us take cuttings.

Work has just started on turning the overflow carpark made into an all-year carpark. Because of the construction work going on we are up in the air when it comes to knowing how much impact this will have on the Growing Friends as we are right

next door to the construction work. We have been told the road coming down to our nursery is to be closed for a while. This will stop the public getting access to us. One alternative is to take a selection of our plants on a double decker trailer up to the visitor centre to sell some of our plants. This a lot of work for Thursdays and Sunday sales for maybe very little financial return. The other alternative is to temporarily close our nursery to the public for ever how long we have to. Safety comes first.

Anyway, that's it for now. See you sometime in our nursesey.

Graeme Hauer  
Growing Friends Coordinator

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## Sculpture in the Gardens

The sixth Sculpture in the Gardens has now closed. We have had a summer of great art and celebrated SitG's ten year anniversary. We have enjoyed the 20 exhibiting works, the extensive indoor exhibition and have paid homage to our 22 permanently placed sculptures.

The exhibition has been well enjoyed by many - but during the pack-down phase it is a time to reflect and thank those who contributed.

Firstly the Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens Executive Committee, who held this exhibition.

Those who were most involved with the nuts and bolts of the exhibition were the members of the Sculpture in the Gardens Organising Committee: Dianne Glenn, Byrdie Ayres, Bill Burrill, Rachel de Lambert, Jack Hobbs, Richard Mathieson, Liz Powell, Linda Tyler, Terry Urbahn, Ainsley Walter and Judy Williams and myself. I benefited greatly from their governance, advice and good judgement.

Our artists, both indoor and out provided the back-bone of the event - the talking points and photo opportunities, that led our visitors

through out the stunning gardens.

The indoor gallery had plenty of the limelight with this summer's unpredictable weather often driving visitors indoors. The gallery was worthy of the attention, it was skillfully curated by Richard Mathieson, who engaged over sixty artists and groups MANZ, Royal Jewellery Studio and Workshop6.

The Gardens' staff were of course right in the thick of it too - I'm not sure where Mich and her visitor centre team get their patience and energy from - they were amazingly attentive hosts of the exhibition. Jack Hobbs, and the Operations Team (especially Shaun, Vince and Alan) gave much on-site support too.

Many Friends volunteers keep things humming along, welcoming visitors, providing directions and cleaning sculptures. Part-timer staff on duty especially for the exhibition Madison Rogers and Deidre Barry were lifesavers during the busy times.

This year the budget constraints were large, but we were buoyed by our large group of patrons, partners and funders. Our contractors all went the 'extra mile' to get the project done on time and on budget. Many thanks from the team go to:

- The McConnell family and Harcourts sponsored our awards.
- Engineers from Airey Consultants, Beca, Envivo and

Structure Design prepared drawings and inspected footings.

- Grants were provided by Auckland Council, Manurewa Local Board and Foundation North.
- Our installation crews Gardens with Attitude and Leighs Construction ensured our artists' works were installed safely and with precision.
- Stevenson Concrete patiently poured concrete into dozens of gardener's wheelbarrows to protect the grass from trucks.
- Suppliers Kennards Hire, Treescape and Envirolands helped with tree and lake installations.
- Turf was provided by Natural Habitats.
- Behind the scenes Snapper Graphics, Jo Davidson, Jessica Douglas and Chester Nicholls all helped all our collateral come together, with its beautiful branding based on Samantha Lissette's sketches.
- Café Miko, and Coopers Creek Vineyard supported our events.
- Connect the Dots, Audio Described Aotearoa, Girl on a Bike Films, Nathan Homestead, Studio One and artist Toni Mosley all contributed to our community engagement programmes.

Thank you to you all, and to those who enjoyed the exhibition!

Kim Stretton

# Strange Fruit

*Strange Fruit* was one of the more interesting works in the recent Sculpture in the Gardens. The artist, Donna Turtle Sarten, engages in topics ranging from anxiety to war and child abuse. Taking on themes most people choose to ignore or push to one side, at its heart, her work is political and socially-motivated. She focuses on large scale installations with the artist Bernie Harfleet.

According to the artist, *Strange Fruit* is a response to New Zealand's military involvement in the Vietnam War. The work serves as a memorial to those who died, those who served, returning with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and the many who have since suffered or died from illnesses related to their time in Vietnam.

This was New Zealand's longest and most unpopular involvement in any conflict. Over an 8-year period, an estimated 4000 New Zealanders served. No official records were ever kept of who went. Since then, a roll of those who served has been created. This nominal roll was originally collated in 1972, through the efforts of Captain C.R. Flinkenberg, RNZA, using long discarded pay documents of that era. History owes his achievement a debt of gratitude.

Images of *Strange Fruit* have been

shared on the NZ Vietnam Veterans and Families Facebook page. Here are just a few of their responses to how they feel about the work. Clearly, *Strange Fruit* is much more than "just" a sculpture.

"... that is a mind-blowing achievement. Word's fail me for the impact and creativity /work involved. 'kia tau te rangimarie' (let peace reign)."

"I love it!!! I am looking forward to going there and seeing my Dad's name ... A great idea to let them know they are remembered for the service and sacrifice they gave."

"Beautiful afternoon at the Botanic Gardens searching for Dad. Like many other Army Brats of my age my Dad (& Mum) has now passed away. And like many soldiers who were there we believe his cancer can be attributed to his service there. While Dad was there we wrote letters to him every week & our Mum wrote every day.

We probably didn't really understand how controversial this active TOD [Tour of Duty] was. We were semi-protected from that by being part of the Army Whanau. Seeing that tree & all those names & so many familiar names, very moving. We found Uncle Ben Ngapo's dog tag along

with 2 more. No discrimination on this tree all these Service Personnel have equal standing.

There were people visiting the tree who didn't know what it was commemorating, it was a privilege to be able to tell them & then there was that strange & sad silence as we think about War.

As much as it affected our service personnel there were also Whanau & babies for whom this had a significant effect, and then the Vietnamese people & I don't think we can forget that either."

"Would love to see the display and to find my husband's disc. He would have been very humble to be remembered. The Vietnam War affected the rest of his life. Thank you on behalf of my husband who went to Vietnam in 69-70. He is no longer with us but would be humbled to know he'd been remembered."

"I visited the Botanical Gardens today in Manurewa. Thousands of discs with the rank, name, and regimental number of all the soldiers that went to Vietnam hang from this tree. It is a beautiful tribute to all these soldiers. A very tranquil and peaceful place with a Tui perched in the tree. As I looked at the name

tags I found some names I knew and you think about them especially those who have passed."

"Thank you for the time the thought the labour the dedication. I just so wish that I could pay my respect to this wonderful memorial tree. May you always be in the hearts of the returned."

"This is such an amazing display of love and respect to honour our Vietnam Veterans in such an awesome manner."

"Think it's great and a unique way of commemorating people who served. I'm up there somewhere so if it's still up when we're next in Auckland I'll see if I can find my tag."

"I found myself tearing up just looking at all these photos. Very emotional especially to those of us who have lost someone and know their name will be hanging from that tree."

"... my heart breaks for everyone affected. My Dad passed two weeks ago & had been affected the moment he stepped off that bloody plane in Vietnam. God bless you all ..."

Thanks to Donna Turtle Sarten for supplying this information.



# Book review - *Plant*

*Plant: exploring the botanical world.* Commissioning editor, Victoria Clarke; project editor, Rosie Pickles. Phaidon Press Inc. 2016

A cursory glance might lead you to think another lovely book on 'traditional' botanical drawing; the perfect coffee table book. But pick it up, turn a few pages, study the works and read the captions and new and unexpected worlds open.

This is a book of works of art which focus on plants or the 'art of botany'.

The introduction, the Art of Botany, is written by Dr James Compton of the Department of Agriculture, University of Reading who is a botanist and plant collector. He describes how the purpose of botanical art has changed over time, as have the materials used to depict the plants.

Botanical art documents a plant's appearance; it is the essential characteristics depicted, most often for the purposes of identification. For the editors this is the essence of the art of botany. The depiction can be achieved in a number of ways using a wide variety of mediums.

Compton in a conversation with Alice Vincent ('The Timeless Pleasure of Looking at Plants' in *The Telegraph*,

24 September 2016) expands on what the art of botany is:

*'It's trying to represent the living plant which it's not alive anymore. Plants, they flower once, and then they're over for a year, or longer sometimes. So you've got to catch it, and you've got to catch it right.'*

And why botanical art? It is a shopping list of apothecaries, avoidance of poisons, scientific classification, seed catalogues and on occasion a vehicle for political statements.

On the first look through, I was intrigued that the illustrations (some 300) are not presented in chronological order. On further browsing and going back to the introduction by Compton the approach taken by the editors is quite an enlightening one. The works are 'paired' either because they are a contrast or because they complement each other. Once this is understood, for most pairs it is easy to see which approach they fall within but there are pairs in the book which can be challenging and fun to figure out. Sometimes a cultural approach to the same subject matter is compared; at other times it is the contrasting mediums used. On studying the book more closely it becomes apparent that some plates that appear 'old' or traditional are in

fact contemporary and the 'modern' can in fact be a couple of centuries old.

Each illustration is accompanied by a text which may give biographical details of the artist, an explanation of the technique / medium used, and / or information about the depicted species itself.

This is a wide ranging collection – 'primitive'; classical / traditional; and contemporary. The technological improvements to microscopes in the 20th and 21st centuries have allowed us to see so much more of a plant's structure.

A large number of mediums appear throughout the book and include: painted wood, acrylic on canvas, copper plate engraving, gelatine silver print, glass, cut aluminium. Radiography, operative confocal microscopy and epi-illumination open whole new worlds for us.

Following the plates, there is a timeline starting at c. 9400 BC and running through to the present which on its own makes for fascinating reading. The timeline is packed with little titbits of history from a given era, largely botanical in nature.

For example, the oldest art work is from 1600 BC depicting 'what is thought to be a red-flowered Greek lily (*Lilium chalconicum*)' from the island of Santorini. 'This may be the earliest extant botanical painting.'

Other examples of information bites include that around 2000 BC 'the medicinal use of *Aloe vera* is recorded on Egyptian papyri'. And we learn that the ubiquitous busy Lizzie (*Impatiens walleriana*) was introduced to North America from the island of Zanzibar in 1896. The last entry (2016) ends with good news and bad: there are 390,900 plant species known to science; some 2,000 new species are discovered each year but one in five of the world's plant species is at risk of extinction.

The timeline is followed by a piece on plant taxonomy, a glossary of botanical terms and techniques, and biographies of selected artists.

We have been fortunate to have at least two artists featured in *Plant* exhibit in New Zealand. These two are in that group of artists who do not confine themselves to the scientific realm but rather convey a political or cultural statement. For example, Alberto Baraya's collection of plastic flowers is particularly intriguing. (He exhibited in New Zealand in 2009-2010 at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery.) Another artist with a societal message in her work which appears in *Plant*, Yayoi Kusama, has a participatory installation - The obliteration room (2002–present) - at the Auckland Art Gallery which runs until 2 April 2018.

I wonder what types of works will turn up in our botanical art exhibition, Ngāi Tipu Taketake – Indigenous

Flora taking place from 30 March to 1 July 2018 at the Auckland Botanic Gardens. Its focus is on native plant biodiversity and the show is part of a worldwide botanical art exhibition celebrating the art of botany.

*Plant* takes time; expect many hours of pleasure and thought-provoking ideas to come from exploring the book. This gem is available in the Botanic Gardens Library and for loan from other libraries throughout Auckland.

Byrdie Ayres

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## Friends autumn bus trip - three grand gardens

Our autumn bus trip will take us to three grand gardens in Epsom and Newmarket - Government House, with Head Gardener Lee Chandler as a guide, Eden Garden (lunch stop), and Highwic historic house and garden, with an introductory talk on Highwic's history.

We are very fortunate that we will have knowledgeable guides at two of the sites we visit.

Please return the enclosed booking slip by Thursday, 29 March with your payment to The Friends of the Auckland Botanic Gardens, 102 Hill Road, Manurewa, 2105. Please indicate if you wish to join the group at the Botanic Gardens or at Greenlane. It is advised to park in Marewa Rd as the Countdown carpark has a two hour parking restriction.

Eden Garden has a café but as there is another function on that day it is likely to be busy. Café seating is only available to those purchasing food or drink, however, there is plenty of

seating around the Garden. Numbers are limited so book early. Friends are welcome to bring a friend. Enquiries: email [admin@friendsabg.co.nz](mailto:admin@friendsabg.co.nz) or ring Liz Powell 6301 259

- |                   |                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>When:</b>      | Saturday, 14 April                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Where:</b>     | Meet at the Botanic Gardens at 9.00 a.m. for a 9.15 a.m. start<br><i>or</i> at the Marewa Rd exit to the Countdown carpark, Greenlane at 9.40 a.m.  |
| <b>Bring:</b>     | Drinks, lunch, good walking shoes, raincoat, etc                                                                                                    |
| <b>Cost:</b>      | \$35.00 per person (includes all entry fees)                                                                                                        |
| <b>Itinerary:</b> | Government House Garden, Epsom; Eden Garden; Highwic historic house and garden, Newmarket. Return to the Botanic Gardens via Greenlane by 4.30 p.m. |

# Botanical Art Worldwide

Linking people with plants through contemporary botanic art

New Zealand Exhibition  
Auckland Botanic Gardens  
30 March – 1 July 2018  
Ngāi Tipu Taketake Indigenous Flora

## Background

The American Society of Botanic Artists' initiative to invite countries to develop exhibitions of original, contemporary botanical art focused on the indigenous flora of the country has inspired 25 countries to participate, including New Zealand. A Worldwide Day of Botanical Art is to be held on 18 May to maximise focus on the message – linking people with plants through contemporary botanic art.

What is contemporary botanical art? Contemporary botanical art is differentiated from botanical illustration where the emphasis is on scientific record and botanical accuracy and from flower painting where the emphasis is on a painting pleasing to the eye rather than on botanical accuracy.

Contemporary botanical art depicts plants or parts of plants in a way which is both aesthetically pleasing and accurate – where the artist's flair and originality can shine.

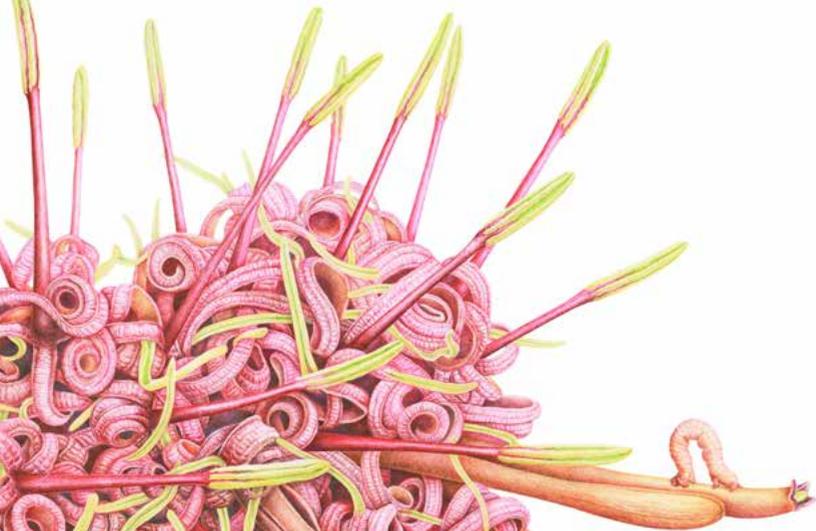
## The New Zealand Exhibition

The Steering Committee for the New Zealand exhibition called for submissions from New Zealand botanical artists and was delighted to receive, in the final count, 96 submissions from 52 artists, plus some entries from secondary school students. The judging panel of Sri Benham, Bec Stanley and Ross Ferguson selected 40 works for the major exhibition with a second tier list to be exhibited if space allowed.

Ross noted, 'The works were chosen on appeal, expertise, plant shown, botanical details and media so as to make an interesting exhibition. We had a surplus of flax and kowhai. (They were both in flower during the submission period, Ross, so no surprise there!!) ... There were no major disagreements between panel members.'

The exhibition will be hung in the gallery in the Visitor Centre at the Auckland Botanic Gardens from 30 March – 1 July 2018, and will then travel to galleries in Wellington and Blenheim (with one other yet to be confirmed).

Works are for sale and some artists will also be providing cards and prints of their entries. An information brochure is being produced and there will be biographical information



*Knightia excelsa* with looper caterpillar © Jenny Haslimeier

on the selected artists available.

During the exhibition a series of workshops on aspects of botanical art and using different media will be held and details of these will be advertised as they are confirmed.

On the 'big day', 18 May, when all participating countries will be linked together digitally, we will be promoting our exhibition to the world and formally celebrating the talent of New Zealand's world-class botanical artists.

Our grateful thanks for financial support for this exciting venture go to The Friends of Auckland Botanic

Gardens, the Botanical Art Society of New Zealand (Christchurch) and Gordon Harris (Newmarket); for professional and design assistance to Jane Zimmerman, Jenny Haslimeier and Richard Mathieson; and for practical support from the Botanic Gardens staff, in particular Mich Newton and Julia Watson.

We are looking forward to an exciting exhibition, showcasing some of New Zealand's amazing native flora and celebrating our world-standard botanical art and artists.

Liz Powell, Lesley Alexander  
and Sandra Morris  
Steering Committee

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Footnote: Botanical Art Society of New Zealand, PO Box 36687, Merivale, Christchurch, 8146 [botanicartnz@gmail.com](mailto:botanicartnz@gmail.com)

The Society was founded in Christchurch in 2004, runs meetings and workshops and holds one major exhibition per year. Members have won awards and competitions in New Zealand and overseas. There is also an interesting website <https://www.botanicalartandartists.com/botanical-artists-in-australia-and-new-zealand.html>

# Seasonal activities

There is much to do in the garden as we farewell the heat of summer and welcome the long warm days and cool nights of autumn. Our main tasks for the next three months include seed sowing, planting, cutting back and pruning.

## Edible Garden

Sow brassicas such as broccoli, cauliflower, kale, mustard and Asian greens such as pak choy. Direct sow peas and carrots and thin out carrot seedling as they germinate to allow room for growth. Sow batches of beetroot every 3 – 4 weeks to ensure a continuous supply. Other winter vegetables to sow now include lettuces, onions, spinach and radishes. Add lots of organic matter like compost and manure such as sheep pellets and work into the soil prior to planting seedlings.

## Perennials

Continue to deadhead perennials that are still flowering and cut back those that have finished their flowering cycle. Now is also a good time to assess your perennial plants' performance over the summer: take into consideration if they are suitable for their location and also do they

need dividing this year?

## Planting

Autumn is the perfect time to plant trees as the soil is still warm enabling them to establish roots over the winter and spring months. A tree planted in the right season with mulch around it will need less water during the summer months. Now is also the perfect time to plant spring-flowering bulbs such as daffodils, ixias, freesias, hyacinths, lachenalias and babianas. Plant bulbs at the right depth to ensure they flower. Bulb-planting depths can be found on the internet or check out our library.

## Sow lawn

Lawns will establish well if sown now. Long autumn days while soils are moist but warm provide perfect conditions for lawn seeds to germinate. Water frequently to help with germination and continue irrigating until the lawn is established.

Mere Brewer



# Travels in Mongolia and Siberia

Pursuit of wildflowers has taken me to many parts of the world during my rather lengthy horticultural career. Usually I have a fair idea of what to expect, but this was not so when I visited Mongolia and Siberia in our winter last year as researching their plant life proved more challenging and less informative than usual. I was delighted and relieved to discover the flora was both rich and beautiful.

It is not just the plant life that makes such adventures rewarding of course. Staying in gers, meeting nomads and attending the annual Naadam festival in Ulaanbaatar (the capital of Mongolia) were great experiences that provided a fascinating insight into Mongolian life and culture.

Naadam festival competitions include archery and wrestling but my main interest was in the

*Geranium pratense*

horse racing. Watching these courageous Mongolian horses race 24 kilometres across gruelling terrain in the summer heat showed how important they were to the armies of Genghis Khan. We also encountered Przewalski's horses, the last true species of horses remaining in the wild today.

Unsurprisingly in the arid conditions many plants had silver foliage such as various *Artemisia* species, *Convolvulus ammannii* and *Veronica incana*. Other notables were *Pulsatilla ambigua*, asters and poppies.

The magnificent ancient Lake Baikal in southern Siberia proved a tour highlight. This ecological hotspot has around 3,500 plants and animals of which 75% are endemic including the only freshwater seals in the world.



During summer the lakes shores are splashed briefly with colour when wildflowers burst into bloom. It was a treat to see beautiful campanulas in full bloom alongside other popular garden subjects including bright yellow *Linaria vulgaris*, soft blue *Geranium pratense*, and daisies such as yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Willow herb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) was plentiful in large swathes, whilst burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*) mingled subtly amongst its more flamboyant companions.

One of my group raced up to excitedly tell me she had found a delphinium, but it turned out to be the equally beautiful *Aconitum fischeri*. However, it was not long before we spotted the blue spires of *Delphinium elatum*, the striking candle larkspur.

I always love finding plants I know from gardens, and these were plentiful including various *Dianthus*, *Lilium dauricum* (syn. *L. pensylvanicum*) and several *Rosa rugosa*.

Next we traversed the massive Lena River on a river boat from Yakutsk to the Laptev Sea in the far north of Siberia. During the following twelve days we encountered abundant colourful plants lining the river banks, took numerous photographs of stunning landscapes and the local Evenk and Yukut people, and enjoyed the company of our fellow travellers and excellent crew.



*Lilium dauricum* photographed at Lake Baikal  
*Rosa amblyotis*



is also home to many fascinating plants. Climbing the steep track to the top of the pillars we found more campanulas, lots of roses, prostrate blue-berried conifers (*Juniperus davurica*) and striking *Sedum telephium*.



*Delphinium grandiflorum* Siberian larkspur in tundra

Other botanical highlights on our river journey were the rich blues of delphiniums, campanulas, geraniums and veronicas, with masses of yellow Iceland poppies decorating the river banks.

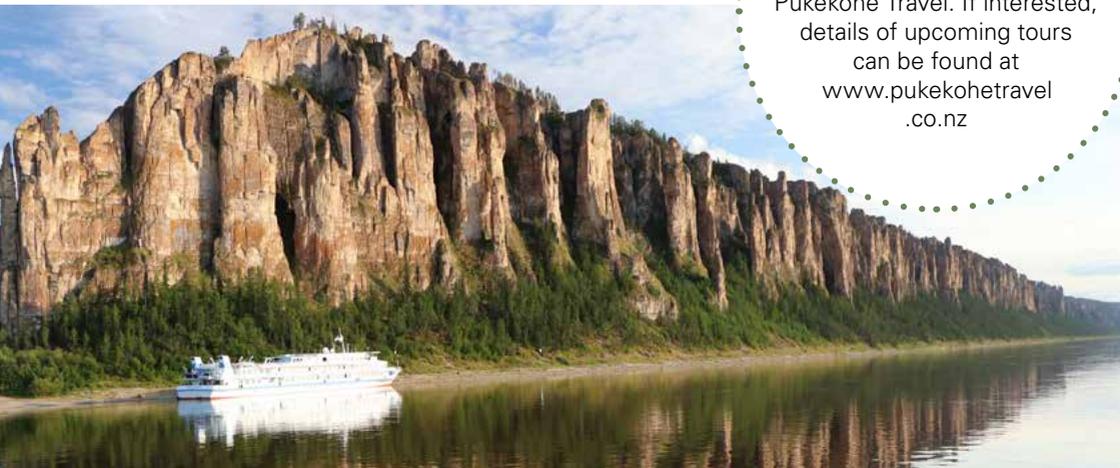
Eventually the trees became stunted and they finally disappeared as we entered the tundra north of the Arctic Circle. Even here diminutive perennials were flaunting colourful flowers during summer's brief respite.

On reflection this proved one of my most interesting and memorable tours, one I would recommend to those looking for something that is a bit of an adventure and outside the usual highly commercialised tourist destinations.

Jack Hobbs

**Want to  
explore too?**

Jack led this tour on behalf of Pukekohe Travel. If interested, details of upcoming tours can be found at [www.pukekohetravel.co.nz](http://www.pukekohetravel.co.nz)





*Rosa canina* pictured in Siberia by Jack Hobbs

