



Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

Annual Report

August 2018

This report outlines the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden's achievements from August 2017 to July 2018.

Being new to both Dunedin and to the Botanic Garden it has been wonderful getting to know them both and appreciating what is undoubtedly the most popular visitor attraction of this city although, sadly, seriously under-resourced.

Education

Botanic gardens the world over are invaluable in raising awareness of plant conservation issues and the importance of species diversity. They kindle an interest in plants as well as potentially teaching children where food comes from, or fostering a love of nature and the natural environment.

A priority for the committee this past year has been to seek funding to reinstate an Education Officer for the Garden. A dedicated, full-time teacher would enable the Garden to provide a rich, hands-on, sensory learning experience for thousands of local school students, approximately 3,300 are within walking distance. An education programme would inspire curiosity and fascination and encourage scientific inquiry about the world's plants. The Dunedin Botanic Garden is an ideal environment to learn about plant identification and increase awareness and appreciation of plants and why our lives depend on them.

We have been seeking funding for a full time equivalent education position but, to date, two funding bodies have turned us down while a submission to the Dunedin City Council 10 year plan also failed to secure any funding.

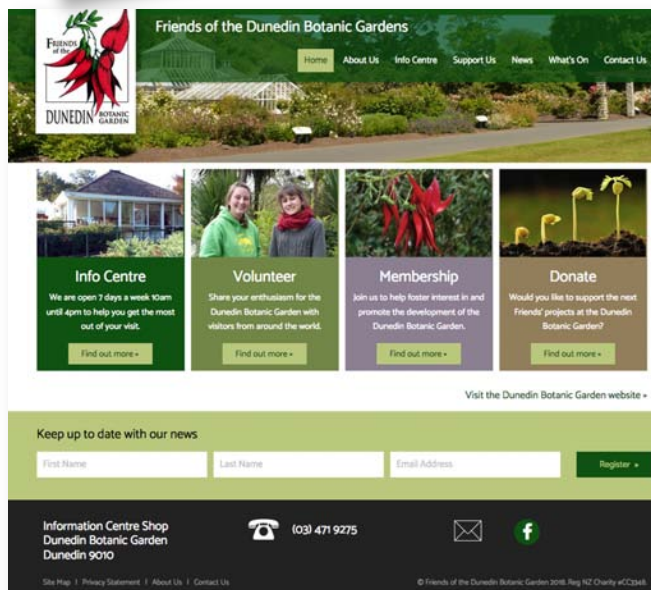
Scholarship

Early in the year the committee agreed that the proceeds from the Rhododendron Plant Sale would be used to launch the David Tannock Scholarship to assist with professional development for the Garden staff. The first recipient of the award is collection curator Dylan Norfield who will be heading to Tasmania to explore possible seed exchange and other reciprocal opportunities with the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

Membership

The committee devoted some time this year to considering ways to boost membership, deciding a simplification of categories and reduction in fees was an option to be trialled and is being presented here today for members consideration - we welcome your feedback.

During these discussions committee members were



reminded by Mick Reece of a unique membership incentive worth repeating here. As a member you can submit a request for a plant you've seen growing in the Garden and, within reason, the propagation staff will endeavour to grow it for you.

The loss of the newsletter compiler and an outdated website meant that communication with our members had been scant. It was a priority to reinstate a newsletter as soon as possible and both paper and email versions now exist. The website has had a considerable makeover and now meets members expectation of the ability to pay their subscriptions online.

The Friends are now affiliate members of the Australian

Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, a link to their newsletter - *Eucalypt*, will be posted on our website for our members to enjoy. The Friends are also now members of the Kindred Group.

The committee have awarded Honorary Life Membership to the following members: Graeme & Margaret Collie; Audrey & Eion Thurlow; Maisie & Gordon Pagel; Mr & Mrs Sinclair; Mrs Sylvia Girvan; Mrs Agnes Pratt; Mrs Lesley Barringer and Toni Wilson.

Information Centre

We are very fortunate to have a great team of volunteers who generously give their time to the Garden each week. Of particular note this year were two volunteers who went above and beyond the call of duty to open the centre on Christmas Day to accommodate the two cruise ships docked in town. Thanks to you all.

The Information Centre shop houses a very limited amount of stock. We hope, as finances and time allow, to address this deficiency and extend our range to feature a range of quality, botanically themed items including ceramics, jewellery, prints and cards and a range of gardening books and magazines.

Plant Sales

We applaud the Garden staff for all the work in preparation for the annual plant sales. Both the Rhododendron Day and the May sales saw an increase in takings. The proceeds from the May plant sale were up 50% from last year.



Thank you to the following nurseries for their generous support enabling us to host these annual plant sales: Blue Mountain Nursery; Goodlife Gardens; Neale & Craig McLanachan; Blueskin Nurseries; Hereweka Nursery; Mitre 10 Mega; Bluestone Nursery; Hokanui Alpines; Otago Polytechnic; Broad Bay Boating Club; Iris Society; Seed & Friends; David Lyttle; Wakerobin Nursery; James Cordery; Mick & Susan McKenzie; Youthgrow Nursery.

Committee Comings and Goings

This past year saw five new members joining the Friends committee: Mick Reece; Susan Hellyer; Ros Hughes; Julz Asher and myself joined Jeremy Shearer; Caroline Byrne, Adele Poulter, Kathryn Thatcher; Gail Loughrey and Louise Kilby. Thank you all for your support. Sadly our secretary Caroline Byrne who has served on the committee for nine years is standing down. Caroline has been a very active member of the committee working hard to establish regular guided tours for visitors to the Garden. We thank her for her contributions. Past president Adele Poulter has also elected to step down, having served as president for three years and as past president for this last year.

Garden Successes

Congratulations to all the Garden staff involved with the spectacular show this summer that was the rare giant, the titan lily or corpse flower - aka *Amorphophallus titanum*. The attraction brought in record visitor numbers, estimated to be around 10,000, over the weekend of its long-awaited opening.

The committee also join the staff in celebrating the retention of their six star status of a garden of national significance. A big achievement, especially since there has been no increase in staff since 1996 and there is a huge reliance on trainees.

It's great to see the Winter Garden undergoing its long-awaited renovation, we look forward to a grand re-opening.



Looking Ahead

Early in the year the Curator, Alan Matchett presented the committee with plans to develop the Upper Garden. The committee saw many advantages and educational opportunities to the Demonstration Garden and agreed to commit \$50,000 to the project. Happily, The Dunedin Amenities Society could also see the community engagement potential and have pledged \$20,000.

With no additional funding granted to the Garden in the council's 10 Year Plan, the Friends have a busy time ahead making funding submissions to support the development and maintenance of the Garden. Our list includes items we submitted to the 10 year plan process:

- Additional funding for the Demonstration Garden.
- Educational programmes to be prepared and delivered at the Garden for schools (and other community learning groups).
- Maintenance and renewal of high use built assets such as the Tea Kiosk and Information Centre.
- Renewal and restoration of heritage and operational assets including Tannock's House, upper garden staff and workshop building, aviary and lower garden bandstand.
- Completion of the works at the new propagation facility on Lovelock Avenue.
- Improvement of the public facilities in the upper garden for parking, toilets and manoeuvring of coaches.
- Improvement of the parking for buses (and also cars) in the lower garden area as the public parking on roads adjacent to the BG becomes increasingly under pressure and the demand for tour buses parking increases with each year.

The committee thank you, our members and Alan Matchett and his team for their support during the year.

Lesley Smith, President
Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden