

Spring 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden,

This newsletter contains some updates around what has been happening in the Garden. Winter has been very visible in the Garden, with some very stunning frosts. If you've visited early in the morning recently, you may have even seen some very confused ducks on top of the frozen pond! There are lots of changes to look out for next time you pay the Garden a visit. Make sure you have a look at the new fountain in the herb garden, or the changes to the Geographical section. Keep an eye out for new artist exhibitions in the Information Centre too. See Catherine's article below for more on these and other changes.

There are a couple of big updates from the Friends, too.

Firstly, we are excited to announce that a wheelchair accessible picnic table has been installed in the Children's playground. This was part of our donation to the playground last year. It will have a plaque on it saying:

"This table was generously donated in April 2025 by the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden in recognition of all Botanic Garden volunteers".



Secondly, after being on the Friends committee since 2019, I have made the decision to stand down at this year's AGM in September. My partner and I have moved to Nelson for work, so I will not be able to give the role the attention it deserves. I thank the committee, particularly Jocelyn (Acting President) and Sue (Acting Secretary), for keeping the wheels of the Friends turning in my absence.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of our members for your continued support of the Friends, and particularly of me as President. I look forward to watching the continued success of both the Garden and the Friends from here in Nelson.

Kind regards,

Sam Moncur

President

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Annual General Meeting - 28th September 2025

A formal Notice of the AGM will be sent out later this month including details of the new Constitution which will need to be approved at this meeting.

We are looking for new committee members so please consider joining us.

Contact us at friends@friendsdbg.co.nz if you are interested or have any questions regarding the role and the commitment..

One proposed change in the constitution is to make the period of membership from January to December rather than July to June as it is presently. Consequently, all memberships current at June 2024 have been extended until December this year. This means that even if you have not paid this year's subscription you are still a member and can attend and vote at the upcoming AGM. Subscription rates will be set at the AGM and invoices for the next calendar year will be sent after the AGM.

Update from the May Plant Sale

Another successful Plant Sale was held in May resulting in a profit of \$8,500 for the Friends to put towards upcoming projects.

We would like to thank Alice Lloyd=Fitt for her organisation and overseeing of propagation etc, all the BG staff and volunteers who helped propagate plants and sell them on the day and those nurseries and businesses who contributed plants or vouchers.

Rhododendron Day Plant Sale

Our annual Rhododendron Day Plant Sale will be held on Sunday 19th October 2025. This year held we will be holding it in the Propagation Facility at 82 Lovelock Avenue. As well as being more convenient, this will mean more parking space is available for the public in the Upper Garden car park.

The Friends' stall will be inside the Propagation facility and other stallholders will be on the gravelled area behind. As well as rhododendrons there will be a variety of outdoor plants raised by the Propagation team at the Botanic Garden ranging from bedding plants through to native trees and shrubs. In addition, other stallholders will be selling a variety of plants, woodturning, etc and there will be a coffee cart. This annual sale is a major fundraising activity for Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden committee to accumulate funds to support future developments in the Garden.

Please bring your own bags and boxes. EFTPOS will be available. We look forward to seeing you there.

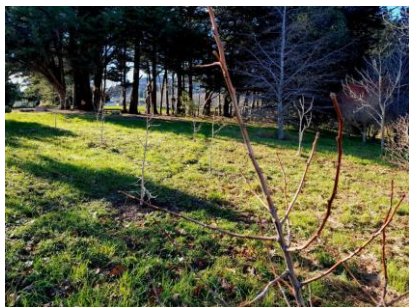
Rhododendron Dell tour - there will be a tour of the Rhododendron Dell starting at 10am, gather in the Dell carpark.

Notes from the Botanic Garden

- Catherine Bradley, Botanic Garden Manager

Autumn and Winter have been a time of collaborative team work as we pull together to get some of our bigger garden tasks completed. Some of these tasks are regular seasonal occurrences such as 'Bush work,' where we methodically tackle invasive pest plant species such as Sycamore or Ivy growth in areas of native bush throughout the garden. Another such task is mulching – there have been working bees of staff, wheelbarrows at the ready, to cart mulch to garden beds – in one instance spreading about 70 cubic metres of mulch over the Geographic borders over a couple of sessions! Many hands help to make light work!

A recent teamwork day in our Camellia borders focused on the ongoing task of re-categorising existing plantings into botanical order and repositioning into most suitable aspects for specific Camellias. This can mean the lifting and transplanting of mature plants such as Camellia 'Bellbird' and Camellia 'Nymph,' (pictured here), as suitable space is made available.



In Autumn, staff and apprentices worked together to establish a new grove of special Ginkgo biloba in our arboretum. These have been growing in propagation since 2017 from seeds of a tree in Hiroshima, Japan which survived the atomic blast of August 6, 1945. Growing these trees was in support of an initiative of *Green Legacy Hiroshima* and *Rotary Club of Dunedin Central*.

Our ever-evolving NZ native plant collection continues to morph in a move towards a more natural style of landscape design. An area reminiscent of Otago high country including snow tussock and alpine plants is moving towards softer, more cohesive surroundings. This area has been converted into an extension of red tussock planting which will provide flowing blurred edges, in contrast with the original manicured lawn border.



Our thematic borders which run along our Great King Street boundary have had a pathway update serving two purposes. First, a change from bark to a harder surface has increased accessibility of these paths, which tended to become quite boggy, particularly over the wintertime. Concurrently, some path areas were narrowed in order to extend a garden border – more room for Autumn themed plants! A work in progress.

The gallery space for artist exhibitions in our Information Centre has been reactivated with our first show of the year (*Peaceful Flight in the Botanic Gardens* – Artist: Kirstie McKinnon) installed for a July exhibition. We invite artists whose work has connection to Dunedin Botanic Garden, to show their work here. With bookings for the next 12 months, we look forward to the upcoming exhibitions in this space.

As we head into warmer days and more sunlight I've been delighted to see the crocuses popping up on the lawn below the office offering a variety of cheerful colours to those that walk by. The daffodils are pushing through, and magnolias flowering (some punished by those frosty mornings!). These flourishes of joy have provided some much needed cheer that we all need right now.

Farewell to two Long Service Volunteers

On Thursday 24 July we had a 'farewell and thank you' afternoon tea in the Botanic Garden Information Centre to acknowledge the long service of Marianne Dick (joined us in October 2010) and Christina King (joined us in March 2012) who have both contributed around 2,500 volunteer hours in the Information Centre.

Marianne and Christina did not know each other when they started but have worked together most Thursday afternoons and have become firm friends.



During their time as volunteers they have noticed many changes, most noticeably in technology used in the Information Centre, and the growth of the retail offering in the shop. "We used to have to write down everything we sold on a spreadsheet – item, number, and price – but now with the computerised till all sales are recorded electronically and stock is automatically deducted from the inventory".

"We used to have sheets divided into boxes (totalling about 450) and had to put a tick in a box every time we gave out a bag of duck food – time consuming but it was amazing to see just how much duck food was given out on a busy day in the summer."

What hasn't changed is the pleasure of working in the wonderful Botanic Garden witnessing the changing seasons, the helpful and pleasant garden staff, and the joy of seeing children proudly coming in for duck food and being able to ask for it themselves.

Marianne and Christina reported for duty in the Information Centre for the final time on Thursday 31 July. We will miss them but wish them a very happy and healthy 'final' retirement.

Farewell from Kyla Mathewson

After 3 years of being curator of the Geographic Collection, it has become time for me to move on to new things and say goodbye to the Dunedin Botanic Garden, at least for now. Personal circumstances have led me to relocate to Christchurch, where I will continue to work with plants in the horticultural industry and apply the many skills I have learnt here.

My time as curator here at the DBG has been invaluable to me and my career. Every single day has taught me something new and I feel honoured to have been part of the team. I have had amazing experiences thanks to the Friends' committee and their financial support in my own personal development – including a trip to South Korea to learn about Eastern horticultural practices, support in competing in the

Young Horticulturist of the year competition, and participation in the International Dendrology Society AGM in Nelson. Thanks to this support, I was able to accept the many opportunities that working at the DBG has presented me.

I will sincerely miss working at the Dunedin Botanic Garden and hope to stay in touch.

All the best to Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden group and the Dunedin Botanic Garden team,
Kyla Mathewson

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