



Autumn 2026 Newsletter

Dear Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

We are half-way through autumn and the temperatures are cooling, but the colours in the Garden are still beautiful. The events and visitors are tapering off but we are looking forward to a boost when the refurbished cafe re-opens under new management early next month. The volunteers at the Information Centre are looking forward to this as I'm sure are many locals and visitors.

Don't forget the Plant Sale on the 9th May, an opportunity to find some new treasures and fill in any gaps in your garden, Please spread the word and we hope to see many of you there.

Also, a quick reminder that membership renewals were due at the end of March. We would be grateful if you could pay these soon, details below.

Regards

Jocelyn Livesey

President, Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

In this Newsletter:

- Notice of May Plant Sale
- Report on visit to Doctor's Point Garden
- Report on NZ Garden Trust Conference
- Curator Tours

Notice of the May Plant Sale

We invite all our members to attend our Annual May Plant Sale to be held on Saturday 9th May 2026, in the Propagation Facility at 82 Lovelock Avenue.

There will be a variety of indoor and outdoor plants for sale raised by the Propagation team at the Botanic Garden ranging from bedding plants through to native trees and shrubs.

This annual sale is a major fundraising activity for the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden committee to raise funds to support staff development and future projects in the Garden.

Please bring your own bags and boxes. EFTPOS will be available.

We look forward to seeing you there.



Friends of the Dunedin
Botanic Garden

MAY PLANT SALE

Saturday 9th May 2026
9am to 12pm

Propagation Facility, 82 Lovelock Avenue

INDOOR and OUTDOOR PLANTS

Eftpos and cash available
BYO bags and boxes

Raising funds to support projects in the Garden



A Visit to Doctor's Point Garden

On the 8th March a group of about 15 members of the Friends of Dunedin Botanic Garden gathered to view Dylan Norfield's garden at Doctor's Point.

It is hard to describe Dylan's garden. The usual adjectives such as amazing, wonderful, astonishing and magnificent don't do it justice. It is all of those and more, much more.



It is hard to believe that this 5 star garden (awarded by the NZ Gardens Trust) was once covered in gorse, broom and pines. When viewing the very tall pine trees bordering the property, Dylan is asked how he controls them. "Yes, I cut them," says Dylan and then explains as we look skyward and make disbelieving noises, "I wear a belt and wait until my father is visiting from England." We're learning about the energy, bravery and skill of this man.

As we move around, the garden opens up one glade after another. Dylan points out plants for special mention. "This lobelia giberroa is a flowering plant in the family Campanulaceae. It is native to the mountains of the Moon Massif in Uganda." And further on, "This magnolia is the only one in the world with variegated foliage." I go back to have another look at it. How often do you see something that is truly unique? "It is going to be marketed in the U.K." Someone asks Dylan why he isn't marketing the plant himself. "That's not my interest," replies Dylan. "I am interested in preserving, growing and propagating plants not marketing them."

With the development of the garden have come all kinds of birds – tui, fantails, kereru...and so on. They enjoy their food and the tranquillity. But the kaka attacks the Birches, Sorbus and Redwoods. It delights in drinking the sap. In the photo above, Dylan shows an example of damage from the kaka.

The garden is a testament to Dylan's passion for growing, saving and propagating plants, his energy in maintaining his very large garden, and his willingness to share his horticultural knowledge with others. A huge thank you Dylan. It's been an inspiring visit and we are all in awe of what you are doing.

Ros Hughes

Congratulations

Congratulations to Dylan who has just been made a fellow of the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture. They describe him as a 'cornerstone of NZ horticulture'.
Dunedin is very lucky to have him.

Tannock Scholarship Report

NZ Garden Trust Conference

Tannock Scholarships are provided by the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden to allow Dunedin Botanic Garden staff to further their professional development.

The most recent recipients were Dylan Norfield and Kate Caldwell who attended the NZ Gardens Trust conference in April. Dylan and Kate provided the following reports:

Dylan Norfield, Collections Supervisor –

The New Zealand Garden Trust conference is an important event for Dunedin Botanic Garden to be involved with. We were one of the founding gardens of the Trust and it is a great independent organisation to record that we are a 6 Star Garden of International significance. This is a continued amazing achievement for Dunedin Botanic Garden, and a sign of the dedication of staff and volunteers to maintain it at this level.

The conference this year was in Timaru with a dedicated day to travel south to Oamaru to see public and private gardens. (see photos below)

It is also a very important event to maintain relationships with other garden owners, see garden designs and styles, learning from a group of very knowledgeable people from all over the country. My talk on Saturday was about Dunedin Botanic Garden as a heritage garden looking towards the future while still honouring the past. I covered aspects of the collections including the more aesthetic areas and the importance of our plant collections. This included looking at possible future climatic events, planting for a future climate and emerging pests and diseases. I also discussed the amazing projects we are doing with relationships with DOC conserving *Craspedia* species, International Plant Sentinel networks through BGCI looking at emerging pests and wild seed collecting through DOC permits.

Gardens are all about change and we need to continue to adapt, but we also need to celebrate the legacy that Dunedin Botanic Garden has. We recently received the Earth Star endorsement from NZGT for our commitment to sustainable practices within the garden and this is an important step forward for all gardens to recognise sustainability and conservation.

Kate Caldwell, New Zealand Plant Collection Curator

-

This year was my first time at the NZGT conference, a chance to step away from managing a plant collection and experience a range of high-quality gardens as a visitor. I had valuable conversations with horticulturists, designers, and lifelong gardeners.

I had thought the gardens differed from the native collection I manage, each offered ideas. I reflected that while we can learn from other gardens, there is no sense in trying to replicate – every garden, place, and gardener has a different story to tell. Excellent garden maintenance is important, but impeccable design, flow, and ‘wow’ factor clearly separate good gardens from great ones.

Conference speakers covered a range of topics. Some focussed on creating meaningful visitor experiences. Dylan’s engaging talk on Dunedin Botanic Garden highlighted the bigger picture: the importance of partnerships, adaptability, and planning for an uncertain future. I felt proud of all that we continue to strive for and manage to achieve here. I also enjoyed garden designer Ross Palmer’s keynote, a lively presentation of naturalistic gardens shaped with place, people, and a changing climate in mind.

Taking a step back from the day-to-day to build professional relationships, seeing what others are doing in the gardening world, and spotting broader trends is invaluable. I will recommend the experience to my colleagues.

A huge thank you to the Friends of the Botanic Garden for making this trip possible, by supporting me with transport and accommodation costs. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou!



Broadfield Park Garden, Oamaru



At Douglas Arboretum, Waianakarua

Curator Tours

Between October and April several of the curators led tours of sections of the Garden for interested Friends and members of the public. The weather wasn't always kind but that didn't stop hardy garden lovers who were rewarded with fascinating insights into different areas of the Garden. We appreciate the curators giving up their time to share their expertise with us.

The enthusiasm of the curators for their areas of the Garden was infectious and I'm sure all those who came along now have a better appreciation of the thought and the work that goes on behind the scenes to make the Garden what it is.

If you haven't been on one of these tours keep an eye out later in the year and come along, you will be sure you to enjoy it as well as learn something new.



Above:: Zane leading a tour in April of the Geographical borders (despite the rain and half-dark)

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are due for the year 1 January to 31 December 2026. Members who have not paid by 31st March may be removed from the membership list. Thank you for your continued support.

Annual Individual	\$15
Annual Joint - 2 or more living at the same residential address	\$20
Life Individual	\$250
Life Joint- 2 or more living at the same residential address	\$400

Payment can be made:

- At the Dunedin Botanic Garden Information Centre, by EFTPOS, Credit card or Cash, or
- By Internet banking using the following details:

Account number: 03 0905 0028999 000

Account name: Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

Reference: Please use your name and 'subs'

Please let us know if your contact details have changed,

Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

PO Box 8097, Gardens, Dunedin 9041. Email: friends@friendsdbg.co.nz