

Spring Newsletter 2026



Dear Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

It seems a short time since the last newsletter but we have more news and events to tell you about. Next month promises to be very busy with our AGM, the Rhododendron day plant sale and the GO Otepoti Garden festival. We hope to see you all at one or more of these events.
Kind regards

Jocelyn Livesey
President, Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

Contents

- AGM Sun 4 Oct
- Garden Highlights
- Mural unveiling
- New Garden curator
- European Garden Tour
- GO Otepoti garden festival and art display
- Membership drive



Annual General Meeting Sunday 4 October 2026

A reminder that our AGM will be held at 2pm on Sunday 4 October at the Botanic Garden Information Centre. For agenda and proposed amendments see: <https://www.friendsdbg.co.nz/news/all>

After the formalities we will hear from Kate Moss-Mason, the Plant Propagation apprentice at the Garden, who has just returned from an exchange trip to the US hosted by the International Plant Production Society (IPPS). Kate will talk about her experiences at the IPPS Conference in Salt Lake City and her time spent as a guest of IPPS members in California.

All welcome!

Garden Highlights

- Catherine Bradley, Botanic Garden Manager

The wave of flowering continues as we farewell the winter flowers and welcome those of spring. The cherry blossoms opened in full last week and have been complemented with the vibrant colours of rhododendrons and spring flowering magnolias.



We were visited by PFNZ (Predator Free New Zealand) last week to have an interview about the positive impacts that trapping was having here (since the last 5 years). It was lovely to stand amongst the happy magnolias that were once heavily attacked by the possums and be surrounded by cheerful tui, fantail, grey warbler and kereru.

The Dunedin Botanic Garden hosted dozens of arborists for the weekend of the 12/13 September as part of the NZARB South Island regional tree climbing competition. The two-day event showcased the skills that arborists require to do their job safely and effectively. There were several different events based in the lower garden that had lots of public interest. The trees were all well looked after.

Alpine House mural

The mural on the rear wall of the Alpine House is complete and was officially unveiled on Friday 9 Sep. Representatives from some of the funding partners were present including Keep Dunedin Beautiful, the Amenities Society and the Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden.

The ribbon was cut by the artist, Lara Hattingh, who described how she enjoyed painting the NZ alpine plants which differ from her native South African plants. An information panel will be installed which will identify the various alpine plants depicted.



New Lower Garden Curator

The Botanic Garden is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Collections Curator, Aaron Whitehead, who will be looking after the Camellia, Otaru-Tien and Lister collections and will be starting in his new role on Monday 14 September. Aaron has demonstrated his passion and dedication to this Botanic Garden through his Apprenticeship and Internship and comes with a great collection of skills and experience from his design and outdoor education background that will provide great value to the team. We wish him well.

Spring: Bloom - Celebrating Gardens

The Spring season of the festival opens on 1 October with an official ceremony and the Botanic Art Exhibition in the Information Centre, which is the Hub for the season.

Saturday 17th is the Grand Casino Garden party followed on Sunday 18 by our Rhododendron Day Plant Sale

During the following week there will be a wide range of activities including workshops, talks and tours, many led by the Botanic Garden staff. Most of the talks and workshop have a limit on numbers of participants so get in quick if you are interested in any of the events. Registration is required for all events, even the free ones.

The final weekend offers a wide range of Open Gardens that you can choose to visit.

See <https://go-dunedin.nz/whats-on> for the full programme of events, something for everyone!

European Gardens and Chelsea Flower Show Tour

Dylan Norfield, the Dunedin Botanic Garden Collections Supervisor, has been invited by the Tour Company to lead a tour of UK and European gardens and the Chelsea Flower Show in May next year. For details see: <https://thetourcompany.net/chelsea-flower-show-and-europe-gardens-tour-ref-cfe/>

Note: Book soon to receive a \$500 Early Bird discount



Special Membership Offer

Blueskin Nurseries have generously donated three \$100 dollar vouchers to help us promote our membership.

All new and renewing members who pay for their membership between 1 October and 1 November will go in the draw to win one of these vouchers. This membership will extend until 31 December 2027 so get in now and renew your membership.

To be in the draw you will need to fill in an application form at the Information centre or on our website at: <https://www.friendsdbg.co.nz/membership> or scan the QR code below:



Contact Details

Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden
PO Box 8097, Gardens, Dunedin 9041
Phone: 03 471 9275

Website: www.friendsdbg.co.nz **Email:** friends@friendsdbg.co.nz

Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden is an incorporated society
formed in 1986 to support the Dunedin Botanic Garden.
Charity Registration Number CC33448