

Christchurch Community Plan 2004-14

Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc May 2004

Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc.

Submission to the Christchurch City Council

Our Community Plan – Christchurch O-Tautahi 2004/14

WE WISH TO SPEAK TO OUR SUBMISSION

Submission presented by: Cameron Moore

1. Contacts:

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Christchurch**

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2. FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC.

The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc. (hereafter referred to as the "Friends") was established 15 years ago as a support organisation for the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. It currently has about 400 members. Further details of its activities are to be found in Appendix 1 on page 12.

The Committee of the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc. has approved this submission.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS TO CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch is a noted "Garden City" and was voted the "Garden City of the World." The corner stone and focus of this reputation is the Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park and the Avon River.

A Destination Benchmarking Study completed for Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing during 2000/01 surveying 1,100 visitors to Christchurch and covering 6105 visits demonstrates the popularity of the Botanic Gardens. Rankings by attractions visited were:

| | % |
|------------------------------|----|
| Cathedral Square | 80 |
| Shopping | 71 |
| Botanic Gardens | 67 |
| Arts Centre | 66 |
| Christ Church Cathedral | 47 |
| Canterbury Museum | 39 |
| Christchurch Tram | 30 |
| Antarctic Centre | 28 |
| Christchurch Gondola | 24 |
| Robert McDougall Art Gallery | 18 |

Visitor numbers to the Botanic Gardens surveyed in 1995/96 were at 1,200,000 visitors per annum and the current but yet uncompleted survey is showing a further increase of visitors above the 1.2 million of the 1995/96 survey.

Further information regarding visitor numbers is to be found in Appendix 2 on page 13.

4. ROLE OF BOTANIC GARDENS IN THE 21st. CENTURY

Each botanic garden has a different location, purpose, and organisational structure, therefore the emphasis of its work may vary. This different emphasis is what gives each botanic garden its distinctive character. However there are a number of roles common to the description “botanic garden”

They are: Civic Park
Education
Conservation
Research

Roger Beale, Secretary. Environment Australia

“Modern botanic gardens.... Now serve a more complex function. Botanic gardens are part of the cultural fabric of society, feeding our significant need for spaces and creating dialogues between us and the natural world. They have developed important roles in science and education, and the embracing of technologies has opened a new era of co-operation and information sharing.

Botanic gardens have a central role in promoting local and global cooperation in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and research.”

Appendix 3. page 15 discusses these roles of botanic gardens more fully.

5. IMPORTANCE OF A VISION AND A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

We appreciate that the Council is currently preparing a strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens. It is vital this is given urgent attention and the necessary resources, before any long-term capital commitments are made.

We need a mental image of a possible and desired future, a realistic, credible attractive future, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists. We need to recognise the mission for the Botanic Gardens must cover both strategy and culture. It will need both commercial and moral rationale and in business terms, it needs to understand what business it is in and what strategic position it is seeking. The development of a mission is intellectual; converting individuals to it, is emotional.

In April 2002 the Friends in their submission to the Christchurch City Council on the future use of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building raised the lack of a mission and strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens. Now after two years it still remains uncompleted.

Further notes on this are to be found in Appendix 4. page 17.

6. GENERAL COMMENTS

We are pleased to see the recognition by the City Council in the allocation of additional resources to reverse the lack of development in the Botanic Gardens over the last decade.

It is not easy to analyse this Community Plan and its financial implications unless it is done under the umbrella of a long-term strategic plan.

The other comment we would like to make is how unfriendly a five volume community plan is to our citizens. We realise Council is governed by the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002. However the sheer size and duplication of phraseology from volume to volume is daunting and probably incomprehensible to the average citizen.

Our comments in this submission are offered in a constructive and hopefully helpful manner as we understand the additional commitment Council is making to the Botanic Gardens. We are sure you realise, the year 2013 is the sesquicentennial of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Botanic gardens have by their very nature a long investment horizon and 2013 gives us only nine years.

7. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

In previous years we have commented about falling standards in our Botanic Gardens and we believe it is under staffed. Looking forward to 2013, the 150th. Anniversary, we are concerned that there does not seem to be any increase in ongoing operational commitment. If you look at the total budgeted expenditure for *Botanic Gardens-Grounds*, there has been almost no increase over four years. In other words even inflation has had to be absorbed. The figures are:

| | \$ |
|---------|-----------|
| 2001/02 | 1,173,300 |
| 2002/03 | 1,146,200 |
| 2003/04 | 1,093,300 |
| 2004/05 | 1,186,500 |

Whilst on the face it looks as though 2004/05 has increased, the reality is different. If one removes the increase in 2004/05 over 2003/04 for increases in Mowing, Conveniences and Building Maintenance Expense the figure is \$1,150,500. This represents a decrease of \$22,800, or 2% since 2001/02. Allowing for inflation of say 2.5% per annum would necessitate an increase of 7.7% over 2001/02.

In looking at the budget for *Botanic Gardens-Grounds*, three areas do suggest further investigation. The item for Mowing has risen alarmingly. We understand mowing is performed by an outside contractor and with the increase in this item, it should be offered for open tender. The budgeted amounts year by year are:

| | \$ |
|---------|--------|
| 2001/02 | 14,900 |
| 2002/03 | 15,198 |
| 2003/04 | 20,198 |
| 2004/05 | 35,000 |

This is an increase of 134.9% over 3 years?

The second item is General Expense which is budgeted at \$58,120 for 2004/05. \$58,120 does seem a huge amount to be sitting in general expenses? Surely some better allocation would give you superior control over expenditure. The prime role of budgets is as a means of controlling expenditure.

Thirdly, we are led to believe there is no increase in full time labour numbers (FTE) and a senior staff member has been allocated to a major project updating the asset data base and thus not available for gardening. We still believe the Botanic Gardens are under staffed. In Volume 1 of the Community Plan, page 29 it states: *Public comments have identified a perceived decline in the standard of the Botanic Gardens*. The plan then goes on to say this view is also reinforced by the observations of the new Curator and Operations Manager. Is "perceived" the correct word to use? What real investigation has there been in FTE needs to meet forecast expectations? It must be added that our contact with staff only confirms a thoroughly professional group of people.

When considering the budget for *Botanic Gardens-Nurseries & Conservatories* we also find a static budget over the last three years. For instance the budget figures are:

| | \$000's |
|---------|---------|
| 2001/02 | 644.0 |
| 2002/03 | 621.0 |
| 2003/04 | 746.0 |
| 2004/05 | 650.0 |

However if we remove the extra Building Maintenance Expense during 2003/04 the figure for that year becomes \$645,000 giving a static trend of expenditure over that period. Not even an allowance for inflation.

Within the sub-group *Gardens & Heritage Parks-Administration* two items require explanation. The first is "Promotion & Brochures. This has been budgeted at \$5,000

for the 2004/05 year. A major branding exercise was carried out for the Botanic Gardens about a year ago. \$5,000 is completely insufficient and needs to be revised.

The second item is the budget for the Information Centre which has been reduced in 2004/05 by 48% over 2003/04. Already the Information Centre only opens for limited hours (10.15am to 4pm in the summer and 11am to 3pm in the winter). There is a need for increased, not reduced service.

You can see why we are concerned. Although large amounts of additional capital expenditure are proposed for the future, little consideration seems to be given to operational matters.

In line with the above comments we are concerned that future capital expenditure will not carry additional operational expenditure to support the associated activity. This must be provided for.

On the other hand, we are delighted to understand that apprentices are swapped with City Care Limited so they receive more comprehensive training. This is excellent.

In previous submissions we advocated for senior staff to be involved with international botanic garden associations in order to increase their professionalism and understanding. We understand the Botanic Gardens are involved in the establishment of a new organisation called The Botanic Gardens Association of Australia and New Zealand. This and wider international groupings are vital for co-operation and information sharing.

8. REVENUE

Last year's Draft Plan made comments about revenue which we queried. The 2004 plan stated "*analysis has revealed revenue has been consistently overstated in the budget in recent years and it is clear revenue targets are not being met in some areas and are unrealistic. In particular this relates to the Botanic Gardens, where revenue targets for lectures, tours and product sales have been overly optimistic.*"

A similar statement appears in this Community Plan and budgeted targets have been correspondingly reduced. Budgeted revenue over recent years is:

| | \$000's |
|---------|---------|
| 2001/02 | 161.0 |
| 2002/03 | 175.0 |
| 2003/04 | 131.0 |
| 2004/05 | 114.0 |

Whilst we agree budgets must have reality based on the business plan, we wonder if these are nothing more than a figure "which we hope will happen." No action, no performance!

On a general analysis of botanic gardens around the world, the average income earned from external sources compared with total income including government/local body income is around 30%. Ours is about 7%. To us this seems a very negative statement reflecting a misunderstanding of commercial reality.

We need to ask:

Who are our customers?
What are our competencies?
How do we "create" our "customers?"

What you are allowing is a lowering of revenue standards each year. You should be making these standards harder, not easier. As Peter Drucker, the doyen of management consultants said "the predominant role of any organisation is to innovate and create its customers."

Over half the visitors to our Botanic Gardens are from outside Christchurch and current estimates on overseas visitors to Christchurch forecast an increase of 58% between now and 2008. A recent visit from the Chief Executive Officer of British Heritage stated their most profitable activity was their shops which enjoyed very high margins.

This compares with our budget for shop sales, which have been reduced by 24% from last year's budget, but even more importantly the trading margin on these sales has been reduced from 45% to 26%? Can this be explained?

9. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

As we expressed earlier, we are pleased to see Council recognising the need for further capital expenditure within the Botanic Gardens. However we do repeat our earlier comment that capital expenditure does require operational expenditure associated with the new assets.

Two significant items are included within the budget period. They are the major tree replacement programme and the proposed visitor facility and greenhouse replacement. These two total \$10,575,782.

The tree replacement need has been known for over 10 years and it is pleasing to see it being recognised operationally.

We commented earlier in this submission about the need for a strategic plan.

In our opinion this should precede any planning work on the proposed visitor centre. You need to know what you are going to use the facility for before planning it. For instance this Community Plan refers to a "staff and visitors" facility, but does not mention education, conservation, research or commercial opportunities? The present Information Centre reflects the lack of a strategic vision at the time it was built. One area not mentioned is its location and the need to provide information at the Rolleston Avenue entrance where 45% of visitors enter. This entrance is the linkage with the "heritage precinct" of Christchurch. It was "interesting" to read in this Community Plan on page 29 of volume 1, "*Interestingly, less than 8% of all visitors find the Gardens' Information Centre*, something we have been saying for some years and one of the major points raised in our submission on the Use of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building. On the same page it states that over half of all visitors to the Botanic Gardens are from outside Christchurch. Current forecasts for overseas visitors to Christchurch between now and 2008 are for a 58% increase. Any plan for additional buildings must contain commercial facilities to help finance the Botanic Gardens. The Council should reconsider its position on an information centre for Rolleston Avenue.

In looking at the schedule of proposed capital expenditure we are concerned about the phasing of the expenditure on irrigation. Although there is \$98,215 allocated to 2004/05, there is none in 2005/06 and then further expenditure provided over the following three years. Currently, watering in much of the Botanic Gardens is time consuming and non productive for its staff. Shifting hoses is not high technology or skilful. By bringing this expenditure forward; staff could be far more productively utilized. We urge you to reconsider the timing of this expenditure.

We are concerned at the long-term implications with capital expenditure. If we remove the three abnormal items of major tree replacement, the visitor facility and greenhouse replacement and the software package for the new data base, then long-term capital expenditure is declining.

The figures are:

| | \$000's |
|---------|---------|
| 2004/05 | 215.7 |
| 2005/06 | 120.8 |
| 2006/07 | 220.4 |
| 2007/08 | 225.5 |
| 2008/09 | 130.8 |

Whilst we recognise there is a certain amount of "crystal ball" gazing with capital expenditure, the trend in this area is concerning.

One technical question is the rule you use for identifying what is capital expenditure. Tree planting is ongoing operational expenditure. If it has been neglected over the years, why do you now treat it as a capital item?

10. GOVERNANCE

Last year we spoke about the “governance” of the Botanic Gardens and we wish to reiterate our comments. To us it does seem this very important City asset is too far removed from effective governance. How does it develop a vision and “business” plan without an effective *Board* structure to which the “*Director*” of the Botanic gardens can relate? Under its present structure it is just too far down the organisation chain to have effective governance. The Botanic Gardens report to operational personnel, whose major operational role is maintaining the asset at lowest cost and balancing the budget. There are very real opportunities in external funding and this requires a wide blend of skills at the governance level over a consistent period.

Currently there is an emphasis on the Botanic Gardens, but over the last decade this has not been so. The procrastination of the decision on ageing trees is a very good example of the lack of governance in recent times.

Ian Blackburne Chair Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust (Sydney)

“From the outside, a botanic garden looks a beautiful place- lush with wonderful plants, tranquil and serene, beautiful birds, ... streams, sculpture, a safe and secure place. Botanic gardens fill many needs... scientific, botanic and horticultural as well as historical, cultural, leisure and entertainment. The realities of all botanic gardens today is that they are businesses ... facing issues such as occupational health and safety for the visiting public, employees and contractors, financial pressure to deliver innovative and relevant programs and sustain themselves in spite of reduction in public funding; and always provide plantings and collections as well as other programmes to meet public expectations.”

“To be relevant today, BGs need to provide leadership in issues of plant conservation, biodiversity and environmental standards and procedures, to utilise modern communication techniques and media; and look at who they are, what they do and ensure they meet consumer needs. “

Our Botanic Gardens are just too important to be managed rather than governed. This is an important consideration that needs to be debated, not swept under the mat.

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11. CONCLUSION

We are pleased to see the increased commitment by the Council to rejuvenate the Botanic Gardens. There is widespread recognition of the value and importance of these very special facilities to our residents and tourists.

As we have stated in this submission we are concerned about the trends regarding operation expenditure, the need for urgent completion of the Botanic Gardens' strategic plan and the governance of this very special asset.

We hope our comments have been helpful and we look forward to working in partnership with you to enhance our Botanic Gardens.

Appendix 1

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC.

The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc. (hereafter referred to as the “Friends”) was set up in November 1989 as a support organisation for the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. It currently has about 400 members and has played a significant role in both financing out of its own funds and facilitating outside funding for specific projects and facilities in the Botanic Gardens. To date it has gifted over \$100,000 of its own funds and facilitated a further \$20,000.

The Friends run a comprehensive lecture and walks programme, plan and manage the annual plant sale as a funding venture. Last year they commenced a daily guided tour programme for visitors. Sixteen members were selected for Guide training and completed a 45 hour training programme under a recognised training provider. Since tours commenced 300 visitors have been guided around the Botanic Gardens over the last eight months plus 300 on Friends’ monthly and Festival walks.

A number of the Friends assist in the physical work in the Botanic Gardens as volunteer assistants to the staff. This programme seems to be useful and appreciated.

A copy of the Friends’ programme is attached as Appendix 5.

Appendix 2

IMPORTANCE OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS TO CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch is a noted garden city and was voted the "Garden City of the World." The corner stone of this reputation is the Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park and the Avon River. Christchurch has become a heritage tourist centre and the western area of the city adjacent to Rolleston Avenue is a recognised heritage quarter within easy walking distance from the city's centre.

It comprises:

Arts' Centre
 Museum
 Christ's College
 City Art Gallery
 Botanic Gardens

The Botanic Gardens are an obvious and focal point for both local residents and tourist. A major survey (1995/96) confirms our Botanic Gardens attract over 1.2 million visitors per annum. This survey did not count tour groups on guided tours who average about 5000 per annum. The profile from this survey is as follows:

| | | % |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Christchurch residents | 762,000 | 63.5 |
| Other N. Z. residents | 185,000 | 15.4 |
| International visitors | 253,000 | 21.1 |
| Total visitors | 1,200,000 | 100.0 |

Currently a new visitor survey is under way and figures to date show an increase over the 1995/96 survey.

It is interesting to compare these visitor numbers from 2000/01 with other well known icons:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne | 1,900,000 |
| The Christchurch Botanic Gardens | 1,200,000 |
| The Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh | 700,000 |
| Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens | 700,000 |
| Canterbury Museum | 550,000 |
| Robert McDougall Art Gallery | 250,000 |

A Destination Benchmarking Study completed for Christchurch & Canterbury Marketing during 2000/01 surveying 1,100 visitors and covering 6,105 visits demonstrated the popularity of the Botanic Gardens. Rankings by attractions visited were:

| | % |
|------------------------------|----|
| Cathedral Square | 80 |
| Shopping | 71 |
| Botanic Gardens | 67 |
| Arts Centre | 66 |
| Christchurch Cathedral | 47 |
| Canterbury Museum | 39 |
| Christchurch Tram | 30 |
| Antarctic Centre | 28 |
| Christchurch Gondola | 24 |
| Robert McDougall Art Gallery | 18 |

Current estimates of international tourist growth forecast a 58% increase from now until 2008.

It is only now we are recognising the importance of heritage tourism and the central role Christchurch occupies in New Zealand in this growing sector of international tourism. The Botanic Gardens play an important role in this.

Appendix 3.

ROLE OF BOTANIC GARDENS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Each botanic garden has a different location, purpose, and organisational structure, therefore the emphasis of its work may vary. This different emphasis is what gives each botanic garden its distinctive character. However there are a number of roles common to the description "botanic garden"

In his book *Guide to the Botanic Gardens of Britain*, published by Collins in 1987, Michael Young lists the roles of botanic gardens as:

- Public access
- Labelling
- Instruction
- Research
- Plants gathered together to form a scientific collection

At its meeting in Canberra in April 2001 the Gardens 2001 Congress defined four major roles for botanic gardens as:

- Education
- Conservation
- Research
- Horticulture

Similarly, the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens Conservation in May 2002 stated:

"Botanic Gardens are institutions holding documented collections of living plants for the purpose of:

- Display
- Conservation
- Education
- Scientific research."

The Botanic Garden Conservation Strategy Conference in 1989 gave a very comprehensive list of activities defining a botanic garden but pointed out that each individual botanic garden did not necessarily carry out all of these functions.

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From these and other internationally recognised sources, the major function defining a botanic garden can be classified under the two over riding headings of **pleasure** and **value**.

These two headings can be amplified as:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Civic Park | Pleasure gardens |
| Education | Interpretation (signage) Importance of plants in our life Conservation Plant life Plant collections Gardening information and advice |
| Conservation | Preserving species Genetic diversity Rare and endangered plants both in situ and ex situ. |
| Research | Conservation Environment Seed exchange Plant collections Rare and endangered plants Herbarium Ethnobiology Taxonomy (plant names) |

How do our Botanic Gardens compare with these benchmarks? Without doubt our Gardens have a very high grading as a civic park or community garden. In the other categories of education, conservation and research the rating would be poor. Yet exciting and valuable opportunities exist in those areas.

IMPORTANCE OF A VISION AND A PLAN FOR THE BOTANIC GARDENS

The Friends are convinced the Botanic Gardens need a vision and a sense of direction to fulfill its potential, both to its citizens and visitors. We are pleased our Council is currently preparing a strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens. It is vital urgent attention and the necessary resources are allocated to ensure its completion. Once the draft plan has been finished it will need professional critiquing before adoption. Council must ensure this process proceeds without delay to ensure timely implementation. (N.B.150th celebration in 2013).

We need a mental image of a possible and desired future, a view of a realistic, credible attractive future, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists.

This mission is much more than intentions and fine ideals. It must represent

- (a) the framework for the entire business,
- (b) the values which drive the Botanic Gardens,
- (c) the belief the City and the Botanic Gardens has in itself and
- (d) the confidence we can achieve the goal to be a leading botanic garden.

Currently Greenspace have set up a review committee to explore the need for a new Staff and Visitors' building. Whilst the Friends applaud the sentiment of this effort, we believe it is the "cart before the horse." This committee has no set objectives. We believe it should be defining the MISSION STATEMENT for the Botanic Gardens and starting to walk, in business terms, the trail of:

Mission
Product areas
Products
Processes and resources

It will need to keep these thoughts in the back of its mind:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| To succeed, how will we look to our stakeholders? | Financial |
| To achieve our vision, how will we look to our visitors? | Visitors |
| To satisfy our visitors, what processes must we excel at? | Internal |
| To achieve our vision, how must we learn and improve? | Innovate |

We need to recognise our mission covers both strategy and culture. We need both a commercial and a moral rationale and in business terms, we need to understand what business we are in and what strategic position we seek. The development of a mission statement is intellectual; converting individuals to it, is emotional.

Coming Events

Insert to Newsletter no. 58 February 2004

Friends' Phone Contacts:
Programme **Adrienne Moore 351 5915**

President **Faye Fleming 351 7798**
Membership **Ruby Coleman 355 8811**

Since the Guide Training Course in August, the Friends now offer two different Guided Walk Programmes. These are **Daily Walks** giving an overview of the Gardens and seasonal highlights
 1.30pm **Monday to Friday from the Museum** entrance to the Gardens and
 1.30pm **Saturday and Sunday from the BG Information Centre. \$5.**

Monthly Themed walks - generally the third Saturday, **departing at 2.00pm from the BG Information Centre. \$2** NB new departure time of 2.00pm operates from March - not 1.30pm as previously. Bring your visitors and friends to join these walks.

A small charge is made at some meetings/events to cover expenses - as indicated for each date. Please note new times and departure places as shown e.g. NB new arrangements for staff walk 24 Feb.

- Thu 12 Feb 7.00pm **Guided Walk - Seasonal highlights** with Friends' Guides from Botanic Gardens' Information Centre
- 13-17 Feb Garden City Flowers & Romance Festival. Details in Local newspapers.
- Tue 17 Feb 'A Night of Music' by former McDougall Art Gallery in BG. 7.30-9.30pm Free. BYO seats.
- Sat 14 Feb 1.30pm **Guided walk - "Plants of the Plant Hunters"** with Friends' Guides. from Botanic Gardens' Information Centre
- Sun 15 Feb 10.30am till 4.00pm **Families' Big Day at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.** See local papers for details.
- Sun 15 Feb **Friends' Plant Sale** from 10.30am near BG Information Centre
- Mon 16 Feb 7.00pm **Guided Walk - Seasonal highlights** with Friends' Guides from Botanic Gardens' Information Centre
- Tue 24 Feb **10.15am Guided Walk - Tree Evaluation, a practical exercise in the field with Staff Member Angus Allan.** Depart from outside BG Information Centre
- Mon 8 Mar **2.00pm Bring a Plant to discuss** and items for **Bring and Buy.** Guest speaker, member Tony Cooper on South African Plants in New Zealand. Petanque Rooms in BG Armagh St Carpark. Afternoon tea.
- Wed 17 Mar **4.30pm-5.30pm Nature in Art - Botanical Art Exhibition** by Dianne Smith, Irene McBryde, Anne McEvedy & Dorothy Poulson. At BG Information Centre. All works for sale. Come to meet the artists. Light refreshments. **RSVP** by 11 March to Adrienne 3515915
- Sat 20 Mar **2.00pm Guided Walk - Autumn Highlights** with Friends' Guides from the BG Information Centre. \$2

- Tue 23 Mar **10.15am Guided Walk – Bonsais - with Staff member Shara Barclay.**
Depart from outside BG Information Centre
- Sat 3 Apr **1.30pm Halswell Quarry Park Visit**
Guided walk and talks by Ranger John Moore, on History of the Quarry and by John Taylor on the Sister City Gardens, departing at 1.30 pm from the Quarry Park Visitors' Centre. \$2. Visit on wet or fine. BYO refreshments. If there are sufficient numbers we can book a bus for \$5 per person. **For bookings and information please phone Alison 9424 989 after 10th and before 20th March**
- Sat 24 Apr **2.00pm Guided Walk – New Zealand Australian Plant links**
with Friends' Guides from the BG Information Centre.\$2
- Tue 27 Apr **10.15am Guided walk - Palms in the Gardens with Staff member Jeremy Hawker**
Depart from outside BG Information Centre
- Wed 19 May **7.30pm The Traditional uses of New Zealand Plants with Dr Murray Parsons.**
At Canterbury Horticultural Society, 57 Riccarton Ave \$3. Followed by supper.
- Dr Murray Parsons grew up in Martinborough, Wairarapa, and studied botany and zoology at Victoria University of Wellington and then phycology, or seaweed studies, at University of Adelaide, South Australia. From 1971 he was marine phycologist with Botany Division of DSIR at Lincoln and later was Keeper of CHR Herbarium, until he left Landcare Research in 1999. Of both Pakeha and Maori decent, he has been involved in various government committees to further Maori participation in science since 1990. He is now consults on phycological, ethnobotanical and bicultural issues.
- Sat 22 May **2.00pm Guided Walk - The Life of a Tree, with Max Visch**
from the BG Information Centre. \$2
- Tue 25 May **10.15am Guided Walk - Tour of the Conservatories with BG Staff Member Greg Salton**
Depart from outside BG Information Centre

Exhibitions at the Botanic Gardens' Information Centre

February - Garden City Flowers and Romance Festival -The Flower Fairy's Night Time Visit to Toadstool Town
March - Halswell Pottery followed, from 16-28 March, by **Nature in Art**, an Exhibition by Botanical Artists.

LOOKING AHEAD. Details in next newsletter. Enquiries 3515 915.

Each month Friends' Theme walks. Usually 3rd Saturday from BG Info Centre 2.00pm.

Staff walks 4th Tuesday now from outside BG Information Centre 10.15am

Please mark the following dates in your diary. Wed 16 June 7.30pm, Sun 11 July 2.00pm,

Sat 9 October - Spring bus day trip to include Alouette Nursery and garden near Ashburton.

Some plants of interest this season. Begonia, Clerodendrum, Plumbago, Eucryphia, Fuchsia, Roses, Dahlia, Cyclamen, Sedum, Monarda (Bergamot), Phlox, Nerine, Kniphofia

Guided walks of Christ's College are available Mon, Wed, Fri departing 10.00am from main College Gate, Rolleston Ave. \$5 Bookings Ph. 3668 705

If you are not already a member of the Friends and would like information about membership or our programmes Please contact Ruby Coleman Ph 355 8811 or Adrienne Moore 351 5915

- Tue 24 Aug 10.15am Guided Walk with BG Staff member
From BG Information Centre**
- Sat 18 Sep 2.00pm Guided Walk with Friends' Guide Springtime
from BG Information Centre \$2**
- Sat 18 or 25 Sep Sale of Bulbs and early plants. Details later.**
- Sun 26 Sep 2.00pm Talk/demonstration "Seed collecting, the practical, the political, & the philosophical"
With Dr Ena Paterson and Rev Hugh Paterson, of Southern Seeds.
Canterbury Horticultural Soc. 57 Riccarton Ave, \$3 followed by afternoon tea**
- Tue 28 Sep 10.15am Guided Walk with BG Staff member
From BG Information Centre**
- Sat 9 Oct Bus trip to Ashburton Area. Details later**
- Sat late Oct BG Plant Sale Date to be finalized**
- Tue 26 Oct 10.15am Guided Walk with BG Staff member
from BG Information Centre**
- Early Nov Date to be arranged for talk from Bill Whitmore on Plant Variety rights including
Roses**
- Sat 20th Nov Bus trip to Akaroa including Garden of Tane with Dr Warwick Harris. Details
from Alison Fox.
This to replace Friends' usual walk.**
- Tue 23 Nov 10.15am Guided Walk with BG Staff member**
- Sat 4 Dec Members' Christmas Party**
- Sat 18 Dec 2.00pm Guided Walk with Friends' Guide
from BG Information Centre \$2**
- No 4th Tue Staff led walk. 28 Dec**