

# Fernglen native plant garden

Newsletter Summer 2016



## Contents

1. Curators report
2. New Labels at Fernglen Gardens
3. A visit to West Lynn Garden
4. Book review 100 Best Native Plants for New Zealand Gardens by Fiona Eadie
5. The Urban Landscape of China
6. Book Review: A Pocket Guide to the New Zealand Orchids. Published by the New Zealand Orchid Group
7. Preparing for long hot and dry summers in your native garden

## Curators Report

After the flourish of activity and presentation of ideas in the lead up to the house removal, surprisingly little has happened since. The whole site has been sown with grass. The basement area intended for a future botanical museum, is covered by a blanket of turf. The irrigation system is still not functioning. It takes over an hour to water with a lengthy hose meaning that a third of curating hours a week is spent watering. We are awaiting a response to a request made to the council Parks Officer to increase curator hours to accommodate the additional watering and lawn mowing. Removal of cut vegetation below the camellias does not appear to be with in the brief of the arborist engaged to look after the plants during the house removal process. In the cleared area below the Camellias woolly nightshade seedlings are proliferating -thanks to the kereru

The Kaipatiki Restoration network, which meets 6 times a year, made a comprehensive submission to the new regional Pest management strategy and asked for support. I made the following recommendations:

- At Fernglen one of the most troublesome weeds is Club Moss
- The kawakawa hybrid is spreading through Fernglen and Kauri Park
- Cymbalaria muralis* (toad flax) needs to be added to KRN's lengthy list of weeds. This pest is also troublesome on Rangitoto.

Some members of the network are applying to the Kaipatiki Board for environmental projects which is something Fernglen can do this year.

Thanks to the committee members; Nev for continuing to water and tidy Ben's Ridge, Rosemary for weeding there also, Steve for servicing the bollard lights to come on automatically.

The education centre has been booked by the "First Light" flowers.

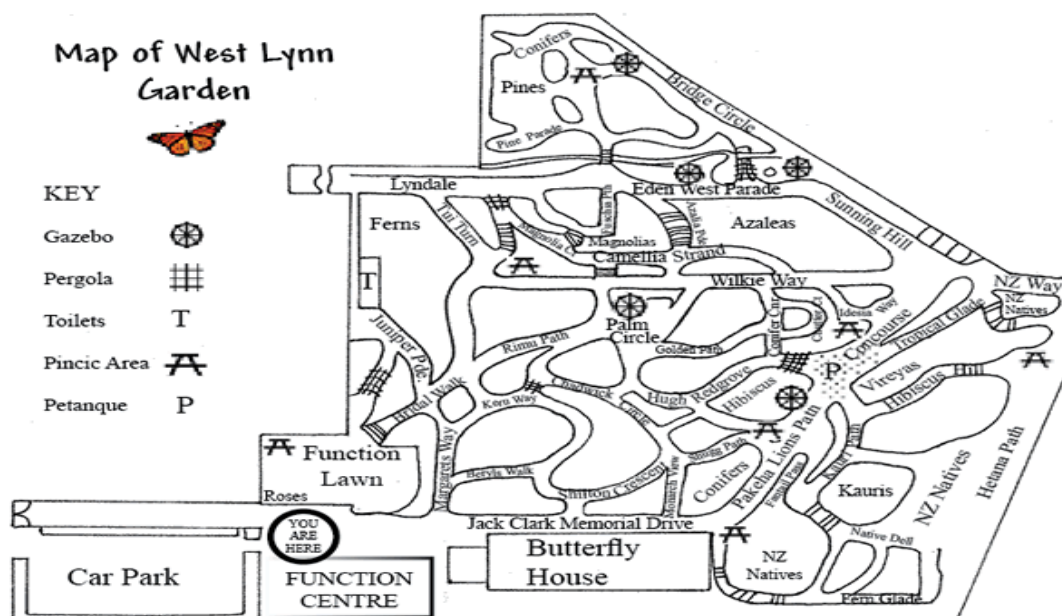
## 2. New Plant Labels at Fernglen

Thanks to Adie and the Auckland City Council we have a number of new informative labels produced by Metal Images installed throughout the gardens. It has long been our aim to have all plants accurately labelled for easy identification, and perhaps inspire visitors to grow rare plants in home gardens. Modern DNA analysis has brought about name changes for some plants which can be a challenge. The previously installed Metal Images labels have remained sharp and need only the occasional clean with a damp sponge. Plant labelling is an ongoing project.

### 3. A Visit to West Lynn Gardens at New Lynn

Situated at 75 Parker Avenue, off Titirangi Road, New Lynn. The gardens cover 2.5 hectares of mature trees and shrubs, a butterfly house, and a new function centre. Planting began in 1981 by local volunteers and plant enthusiasts. It contains collections of a variety of plants including conifers, camellias, magnolias, hibiscus, vireya, rhododendrons, and acacias. The myriad paths throughout the garden are often named after plants or horticulturists such as Jack Clark and Hugh Redgrave. Like Eden Gardens, they have an endowment scheme. A memorial plaque to a loved one is placed at a tree of choice at a cost of \$350.00. The butterfly house is in operation through the summer months. Monarch butterflies are bred in the enclosure and school groups are invited to observe the life cycle. The pentanque court is available to the public and a regular pentanque group meet on Sundays at 10am. Worth a visit

<http://www.westlynnngarden.org.nz/>



#### 4. Book Review: 100 Best Native Plants for New Zealand Gardens by Fiona Eadie



First printed in 2001 and deservedly reprinted five times. Apologies to Fiona for the delay in reviewing her book in the Fernglen newsletter. She is well known to Nev the reviewer since her time at Oratia Native Nursery.

The excellent introduction outlines how to choose a native plant for your garden. Included is a guide on cold tolerance from first-hand experience. Fiona moved from Auckland to Dunedin to be the head gardener at Larnach Castle. Exploring various soil types is followed by a comprehensive guide on how to correctly plant native shrubs.

The large section on individual plants covers the likes and dislikes of each plant, potential pests and problems, care and maintenance, and landscaping suggestions. This comprehensive review of the specifics of individual plants is informative and interesting and probably quite unique to this publication. The fern section while not extensive, covers all of the ferns comparatively easy to cultivate in home gardens. The climbing plants section includes the major climbers, and showcases an important part of our native flora that are often overlooked.

Fiona provided most of the striking photography, often with an image of the trunk, leaves, flowers and fruit of each plant. Additional photography is by Yvonne Cave.

A highly recommended extensively revised publication, easy to follow and beautifully illustrated. Advice is both inspirational and practical and covers the top 100 native plants for your garden, this book deserves to be reprinted often.



## 5. The Urban Landscape of China

*Ginkgo Biloba*



Nev has recently been to China and was fascinated to observe the large urban landscapes, and impressed by the enormity of the scale of such intensive and creative inner city landscaping. Everywhere, motorways and roads are bordered by mass plantings, particularly of evergreen trees and the prolific *Ginkgo Biloba*. In Southern China the trees were very tropical and included many *Ficus* species, *Osmanthus*, *Moraceae*, and *Caesalpinaceae*. Further South palms are planted

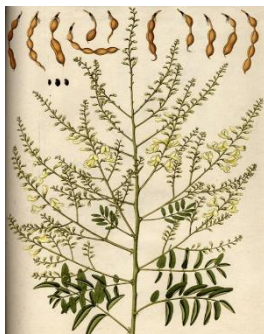
in profusion and many streets were defined by plantings of *Livistonia chinensis*. A passion for topiary is demonstrated by plants in an array of shapes including elephants, birds, and dolphins creating the centrepiece of a park or roundabout. Intensive tree and flower growing was initiated by Mao in the 1950's. Since the 1990's there has been increased legislation effort to "green the cities". Air pollution has become a serious and aggravating environmental problem and urban vegetation is increasingly recognized as an alternative ameliorative method by removing some pollutants. Immaculate parks are frequently the domain of female gardeners, where large trees are often under planted with flowering annuals or shrubs. Older temples, pagodas, public buildings and hotels feature large containers displaying healthy mature *Cycads*, *Bonsais*, *Conifers*, and *Ficus*. A park in Shanghai opposite the historic Bund, features a vertical garden stretching for hundreds of metres and containing tens of thousands of potted



plants. Tiananmen Square is notable for masses of potted *Poinsettia* lining the route to Mao's tomb. On the outskirts of cities intensively cultivated orchards grow a range edible plants like persimmons, pomegranates, walnuts, chestnuts and apples, with bananas and citrus fruit in the south. On either side of the Great



vertical garden near The Bund



*Sophora japonica*

Wall walnut trees grow wild. The urban landscapes are supplied by hundreds of kilometres of tree nurseries growing specimens to be transplanted and can be seen from the bullet train. In one of the higher profile gardens the plants were labelled with Latin, common and Chinese names. This helped identify the Scholars Tree *Sophora japonica*, which is related to the New Zealand kowhai.



## 6. Book Review: A Pocket guide to New Zealand's Orchids Published by New Zealand Orchid Group, 2015

With superb photography this publication provides an exceptional guide to identifying orchids in the field. As many of our native orchids are rare and endangered they have often proved difficult to identify, and subsequently became an overlooked part of the flora. This pocket sized guide accurately describes individual orchids and details useful flowering times, habitat and unusual features to aid identification. There are a large number of

native orchids distributed through the country.

Most orchids are terrestrial plants that die after flowering. Others are epiphytic and found perching on trees. Such orchids nest on branches for support only, and do not extract nutrients from the host tree. A few can be described as epiparasitic and obtain their nutrients from fungus parasites on the roots of trees.

As many native orchids are very small they have been described as having a "shy nature". They do not stand out as you tramp through bush, rather you must hunt for them on the forest floor. These plants are not to be underrated as they inhabit most of New Zealand's diverse habitats.

The New Zealand orchid group responsible for this publication began in 1982 and promotes both interest and conservation for native orchids. It publishes a regular journal and field excursions.

<http://www.nativeorchids.co.nz/>

*Calochilus herbaceus*  
Copper Beard Orchid  
Felicity Goodyear -Smith  
photographer



## Preparing for a dry summer in your native garden

1. Plant correctly in the winter and spring months. Add copious amounts of compost to the existing soil when planting
2. From late October onwards mulch heavily to maintain soil moisture
3. Water deeply twice a week rather than a quick water every night
4. Select native plants that thrive in hot dry conditions
5. Learn from failures, there will be a reason for a plant not thriving.

