

Newsletter

*For Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc
To Promote, Protect, & Preserve*

No 88, Winter 2012

President's Report

If you have walked through the gardens recently, you will have noticed that the Cuningham House, Townend House, Fern House and other attached houses are all still closed to the public. They have been assessed by engineers, and by the time of the next Newsletter, we are hoping to know the future of these buildings. Whatever happens, it is vital that the Botanic Gardens end up with show houses that can stimulate the public to further their appreciation and knowledge of plants from different climates.

On a positive note, the project for the proposed Botanic Garden Centre has been accepted by the Council, and tender documents are now being prepared. I hope to report more fully in the next Newsletter. Once the tendering process is finalized, and a tender has been accepted, the Friends' Committee will be working with the gardens to help with funding of educational aspects of the visitors centre. We have had preliminary discussions, but nothing has been finalized at this early stage.

Preparation is underway for the photographic competition to be held jointly between the Friends and the Botanic Gardens. The competition will take place over a period of a year so that entrants can take photographs throughout the four seasons. We will be involved in seeking sponsors for the prizes for the various categories, and our new website will have a page dedicated for the uploading of entries.

Our new website is ready to go live, and we are excited that Landcare will probably host the site for us. Landcare are in the process of redesigning their company website, so we are waiting for a time in which our site can be hosted. This should not be too long.

The guiding season has come to an end for the year, but if you have a group that would like a guided walk in the gardens, phone Pat Whitman 384 3475, she will be happy to arrange something to suit your particular interests. The guides have put in a sterling effort again this year, especially as the downturn in tourist numbers has meant that on many days the guides have had no people to guide. I always find it surprising that most people who go on the guided walks are either international tourists or visitors from other parts of New Zealand. How well do local people really know the Botanic Gardens and the hidden gems within? Some of the U3A groups in Christchurch have benefitted from our guides knowledge of the gardens

The propagation teams are still working hard with potting up and potting on of plants that will be ready for sale in the coming year. They have had their stock moved twice in the last 3 or 4 months while preparation for the new Visitors' Centre takes place. They are waiting for their propagation house to be re-erected on the new site in Riccarton Ave. Eventually, they will have more space, and a shade house. I understand that pop up sprinkler irrigation has been installed. The propagation teams have produced thousands of plants in the last year which have raised a significant sum of money for the projects we help fund.

The AGM is only a few months away (August), if you are looking to be more involved with the Friends, a place on the Committee might be for you. If you are interested phone me 348 5896, and I will invite you to one of our meetings so that you can meet us and see what we do.

Charles Graham

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New guides for the botanic gardens

The Friends of the Botanic Gardens will be training a new group of guides in August of this year 2012. The trained guides provide a daily walking tour for locals and tourists every day from 1.30 - 3 p.m. from mid-September to mid-May beginning at the Museum entrance. The training covers introductory botany, plant knowledge specific to the Gardens, knowledge of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens layout, safety, Gardens management, history of the Gardens and Christchurch, Pre-European–Maori history, communication and interpretation skills.

The training is intensive and practically based, with the trainees practising their guiding skills in the Gardens each training day. The training coordinator is Neil Fleming who is using the skills of the existing guides and Gardens' staff in an exciting and thorough programme. Training is for five hours (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.) on Mondays and Tuesdays for four weeks.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact Faye Fleming at 351 7798 or email at faye.fleming@ihug.co.nz.

Distribution of Newsletter

We distribute the Newsletter by email to those members who have given us their email addresses and who have not requested otherwise. If you would prefer to receive the Newsletter by mail, rather than electronically, please contact Philippa Graham – phone 348 5896 or email philippa.graham@gmail.com

Enquiries about membership should be made to Philippa Graham (phone number above)

Contact Numbers

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Ex Officio

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Gardens' News

From Curator John Clemens

As the leaves fall from the poplars and oaks in Hagley Park, from my office window I can now see the water of Victoria Lake glistening in the distance. Two things spring to mind. First, while the waters of Victoria Lake and the Botanic Gardens ponds are not quite sparkingly clear when viewed close-up, it is certainly good to have them filled once more. We are told it will be some time before the original wildlife returns to these newly clay-lined water bodies. My second thought was that before too long the views from our offices in the Botanic Gardens operations centre and nursery area will change forever as we expect to embark on the carefully planned process of demolishing the old and constructing the new Botanic Gardens Centre (sometimes referred to as an Entry Pavilion).

The new building



Recent simulation of the appearance of the new Botanic Gardens Centre and landscape

A

As you might have heard, the Council resolved at its meeting of 11 April 2012 that we “should continue work on the Botanic Gardens Entry Pavilion project including tendering the construction contract to ensure the construction is completed in time (December 2013) to coincide with the Botanic Gardens’ 150 year anniversary.” This is grand news. All going well, the new building will take shape and look somewhat like the simulation shown above.

The building will be located on the site of the existing operations and nursery area, although aligned with the Christ’s College boundary rather than running along the bank of the Avon River. This will open up the river bank, with views from the large lawn outside the building across towards Victoria Lake and Hagley Park.

Avon River bank repaired

And as the views out from the Botanic Garden will change, so too will the view back from Hagley Park towards the new building. Already we have had to clear away the congregation of buildings between our nursery and the Avon River (including the Friends propagating greenhouse, our shade house and several standing out bays). This has allowed Phase 1 of essential bank repairs to be undertaken, with giant stone boulders forming the foundation of a bank that should last the test of time. The river bank has been carefully graded up to the old Botanic Gardens greenhouses. The bank will be grassed and native trees planted.

Close scrutiny of Botanic Gardens buildings

At the request of the Project Manager for the new building, we expect Botanic Gardens staff to progressively vacate the old nursery and operational facilities to allow phased demolition to proceed ahead of the construction phase. Nearby, all of our conservatories remain closed pending detailed engineering evaluation. Unfortunately, this means we are unable to treat visitors to the favourite floricultural and beautiful displays of the Townend, Garrick and Gilpin Houses. Nor can they explore the winter garden environment of Cuninghame House. Even the Fern and Foweraker Houses are shut. While we regret having to deny people access, it is important that the engineers do their work first to assess these and around 1600 other Council- owned buildings.

Tour of duty and delight in China

Part of the Curator's job is to tell the public about our work in the Botanic Gardens (and to listen to feedback!), typically at lively gatherings of community organisations. It is one of the most enjoyable parts of the job, although I was a little nervous about addressing the New Zealand China Friendship Society – many of whose members have long association with China – about my recent and first venture to China. I gave an expanded version of the talk to the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens on Mothers' Day afternoon.

Christchurch has a long association with China. Long before mayoral delegations of recent times, Gansu Province enjoyed a friendship relationship with our city, as I understand it, largely at the instigation of Rewi Alley, the Springfield-born educator and social reformer who devoted 60 years of his life to the Chinese people. We now enjoy a Sister City relationship with Wuhan and collaborative links between our botanic gardens have been proposed. For 10 days before Christmas 2011, I gave lectures, and investigated collaborative possibilities in face-to-face discussions with scientists working in Wuhan and other university centres in eastern China. I also saw some of the sights in Beijing and Xi'an, glimpses of which and other places are shown below in grey November weather.

I sincerely thank the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens for meeting the cost of the international air fares and accommodation in China, and to Dr Jiancheng Song for other material support, to Eugene Feng of Canterbury Development Corporation for advice and facilitating invitations, and to our hosts who were most generous with their time. I hope to continue to develop a close relationship with the people in Wuhan and elsewhere in China, to the benefit of botanical collaboration and the work of our Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

I called my talk to the Friends a Tour of Duty and Delight because: while I was there on Botanic Gardens business, it was a delight to meet such knowledgeable and hospitable hosts. Readers who have a particular interest in China and would like to know more about my visit, or feel that they might be able to assist in the link between our botanic garden and institutions in China, please make contact by phone (941 7589) or email (john.clemens@ccc.govt.nz).



Clockwise from the top left: *An ancient and revered Chinese juniper tree in the Forbidden City, Beijing: “live cultural heritage”;* *interpretation panels (botany and plant physiology) in Xi’an Botanic Garden;* *a quick trip to the Great Wall at Mutianyu;* *a view of part of the large aquatic botany garden at Wuhan Botanical Garden.*

Articles

Botanists let Latin loose.

Latin is a bit like a zombie: dead but still clamouring to get into our brains. In one discipline, however, Latin just got a bit deader. For at least 400 years, botanists across the globe have relied on Latin as their lingua franca, but the ardour has cooled. Scientists say plants will keep their double-barreled Latin names, but they have decided to drop the requirement that new species be described in the classical language. Instead, they have agreed to allow botanists to use English (other languages need not apply). In their scientific papers, they can still describe a newly found species of plant or algae or fungi in Latin if they wish, but most probably will not.

“The new chatter is in chemicals and molecules” says Laurence Dorr, one of three Latinists in the Smithsonian Institution's botany department who would help their colleagues translate. “It was heading toward extinction” says Warren Wagner, department chair.

The change, which came into effect on 1 January, is more than just academic. Smithsonian botanists alone might introduce as many as 100 new plant species a year. Globally, scientists discover 2000 new species per annum. As many as one in five of the world's plant species have yet to be identified, and it is not until they are named and known to the scientific community that they can be protected and studied further. “You can't talk about it until that point” says James Miller, vice president for science at the New York Botanical Garden. “It's not the end of knowing a species, it's the beginning.

Miller is a big fan of the relaxed rule, which, along with another measure allowing species to be published in electronic journals alone, will remove bottlenecks in the process of getting new flora out there. When he published the discovery of a small tropical tree called *Cordia koemarae*, he had to write a Latin description that ran to 100 words and included: “Folia persistentia; laminae anisophyllae, foliis majoribus ellipticis”. Roughly translated - the tree hangs on to its leaves, which vary by size. The bigger leaf blades are elliptical.

“The bottom line is that only a tiny percentage of us really learn much Latin and are really capable of writing a grammatically correct description” he says. “It's an additional incumbrance.

Botanists and horticulturists will continue to use the Latin scientific names for plants as part of their work. The same goes for the pretentious gardener who, trug in one hand, pruners in the other, can wax on about the *Syringa* (lilac), *Salix* (willow) or *Solidago* (goldenrod), *et cetera*.

The Latin description rule was relaxed by a committee and ratified by delegates to the International Botanical Congress, which gathers every six years. The vote, held in July, was over-whelming in favour, says Miller and other attendees. But it was not unanimous. Roy Gereau, a researcher at the Missouri Botanical Garden who opposed it, says the Latin requirement served an important role in preserving the link to botany's academic past. Latin has been the language of international botanists since the Renaissance.

Zoologists dropped the Latin description rule years ago, though botanists point out that while there are only about 5000 species of mammals on the planet, there are at least 400,000 plant species. Add insects to the animal kingdom mix, however, and you descend into a taxonomic Hades. If plants top half a million, “there are 14 times that many beetles”, Gereau says. “Insect museums seldom catalogue collections at the level of species.

The learned plant men of the Babel of Europe talked to each through their Latin texts, and even Latinised their own names. Carolus Clusius, who brought tulips to the West also published the groundbreaking *Rariorum Plantarum Historia* in 1601. A century and a half later, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus codified taxonomy in *Species Plantarum*, giving science the system of Latin binomial nomenclature to catalogue species: *Homo sapiens*, *Ginkgo biloba*, *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

Gereau, a Latinist, argues that botanists still need to be versed in the classical language. "There are many works that are not translated that remain important to us that increasingly no one is learning to use" he says. On a practical level, the requirement was an obstacle to fraud, he says. The Latin requirement helped prevent the naming of bogus species because scientist-translators like himself acted as gatekeepers. "When you think of the size of the trade in orchids or bromeliads, if you can name a new species and offer it for sale, you can make a hell of a lot of money from eager collectors and breeders" he says.

Washington Post

Pierré d'Incarville

Up until the 17th and 18th centuries the outside world knew very little of China. The country was closed to foreigners.

Some of the earliest foreigners allowed into the country were Jesuit missionaries. In 1742 a group of Jesuit missionaries were invited to China. The group included Pierre Nicolas Le Chéron d'Incarville.

D'Incarville had been born in France on 21 August 1706. He entered the Jesuit order in 1727 and taught in Quebec between 1730 and 1739.

The Jesuits were invited to advise the Emperor Ch'ien Lung on the cultivation of European flowers to be used in his "Garden of Perfect Brightness". Although not a botanist by early training, d'Incarville studied for six months at the Paris Jardin du Roi in preparation for his trip, as this visit to Peking would be the first opportunity to gather Chinese plants so far north.

At the start the Emperor showed little interest and denied d'Incarville access to the imperial gardens. However when d'Incarville showed the emperor some sensitive plants (*Mimosa pudica*) that he had grown, the Emperor was so amused that he allowed the Jesuit into the gardens. D'Incarville was soon on excellent terms with the Emperor and continued to introduce many other European plants to him during his time in China.

D'Incarville initially faced many obstacles describing, collecting and sending Chinese plants back to Paris. D'Incarville's movements were limited and the only times he was allowed out of the city were not suitable for plant collection. Once, however, he gained the friendship of the Emperor he was given greater freedom and he was able to describe and send back seeds of several important plants then unknown in Europe. He then came up with another problem; collections were sometimes lost in shipwrecks or plundered by the British. Because of this d'Incarville began sending letters and botanical packets overland via a regular caravan that trekked through Mongolia and Siberia to Moscow. From there the packets were sent to Bernard de Jussieu, Professor of Botany at the Jardin du Roi.

Sadly much of the plant material was not examined or catalogued for over 140 years. There were however some notable exceptions. In 1747, seeds of the pagoda tree or Chinese scholar tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*, previously known as *Sophora japonica*) were planted near Paris and first flowered in 1779. It was introduced to Kew Gardens by James Gordon in 1753. Also grown were seeds of tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and golden-rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*).

All three of these trees have been grown in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

There is a pagoda tree in the centre of the iris garden at the end of the herbaceous border and another larger specimen to the west of the water garden.



Pagoda tree in iris garden.

A large tree of heaven stood on the Armstrong Lawn at the end near the Curator's house until a few years ago when it had to be removed. *Ailanthus* is a useful tree. It does well in poor soils, tolerates air pollution, survives cement dust near lime works and also fumes from the coal tar industry. Its leaves absorb significant amounts of sulphur in high traffic areas and its tissue can accumulate high levels of mercury. *Ailanthus* reproduces not only by seed dispersal but also by sprouting from stumps and root portions. An individual tree can produce 325,000 seeds in a year and they are easily wind dispersed. Seeds have been observed to germinate after only six weeks. Seedlings produce a well-formed taproot in less than three months. Its root system is aggressive and can cause damage to sewers and foundations. Tree roots also produce toxins which prevent the establishment of other species.

A group of three golden-rain trees can be found west of the meteorological station. (See Newsletter No 80.)



Incarvillea, hardy gloxinia

In addition to his correspondence work, d'Incarville wrote several works that were published in Europe. These covered topics such as the *Ailanthus* silkmoth, Chinese varnishing and fireworks, as well as a French-Chinese dictionary. He also published a copy of a 16th century botanical illustration work, the *Yuzhi bencao pinhui jingyao*.

He was the first European to describe the chinese gooseberry or kiwifruit.

D'Incarville died in Peking in June 1757. His name is remembered in the generic name of one plant; the name *Incarvillea* was given to the hardy gloxinia or Chinese Trumpet flower.

Largely based upon notes by Barbara Brailsford

Guiding on Shaky Ground

By Alan Hart, May 2012

In a previous article "Guiding in Numbers" (*Friends of the Botanic Gardens, Newsletter, No. 82*), I gave an account of the activities of the volunteer guides who provide walking tours of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, for the seasons 2008-2009 and 2009 - 2010, based on data collected by the guides. This article considers the data collected for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 seasons. It is not a cheerful article. Nevertheless, the data provide an important record of one of the ways in which the Gardens interact with visitors.

The 2010 - 2011 and 2011 - 2012 seasons encompassed severe earthquakes and aftershocks. After the very damaging earthquake in February 2011, it was not surprising to find a major drop in the number of people wishing to take a tour. Despite the dispiriting experience of often finding no-one to take on a tour, the guides indomitably provided their usual service as soon as it was possible to do so after each unnerving event.

In Figure 1 we can see the large drop in client numbers in the last two seasons compared to earlier seasons. If we look more closely at the numbers, month by month (Figure 2), we can see that the numbers were low in the months following the earthquake in September 2010, but increased substantially in February 2011; perhaps this is a tantalising suggestion that had the earth remained calm, visitor numbers might have returned to normal. After the strong and damaging quake on 22 February 2011, the guiding service came to an abrupt halt but started again in September 2011. The 2011 - 2012 season was quieter overall with regard to earthquakes, except for the flurry of aftershocks following the large aftershock on 23 December, but visitor numbers remained low. The season finished early, when the Canterbury museum closed in mid-April 2012. Up to the closure of the Museum there had been hardly any visitors in April (perhaps two - the data are stored in the Museum and unavailable); it seems unlikely that visitor numbers would have shown a sudden increase in the last few weeks of the season.

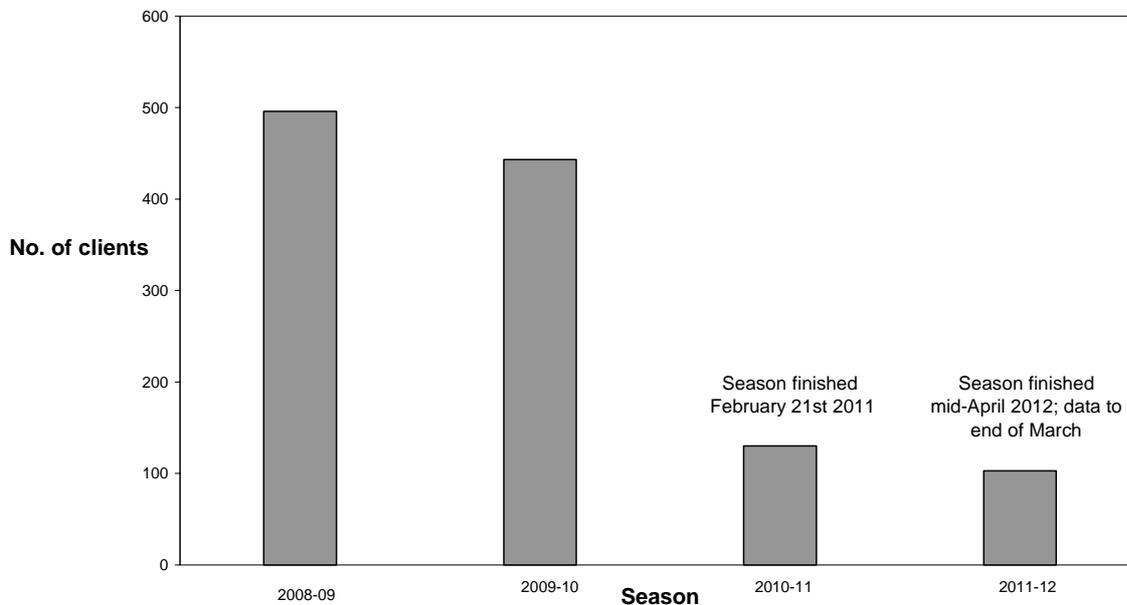


Figure 1: Total number of clients per guiding season

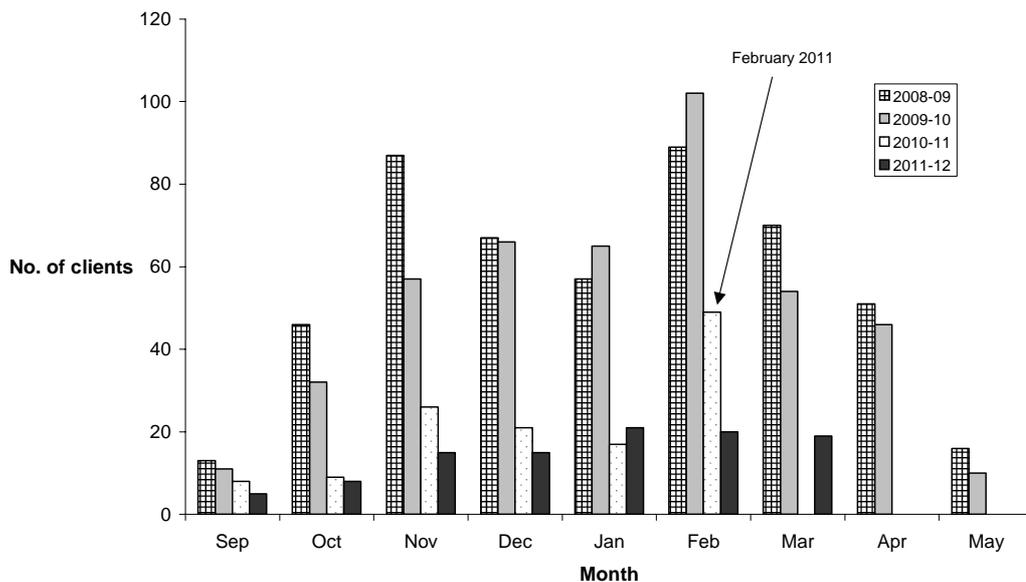


Figure 2: Client numbers per month

In contrast to the numbers of visitors taking a tour, the number of all visitors to the Gardens appears to be returning to levels seen before the earthquakes. In the months March to June 2011, the number of all visitors fell to as low as about 20% of the usual number, but by July 2011 numbers had returned to levels characteristic of previous years. (The annual number of all visitors to the Gardens for the July - June years 2008/09, 2009/ 10, 2010/ 11 were - rounded to the nearest hundred - 1,279,200, 1,232,200, 1,191,000 respectively.)

The two pie charts (Figures 3 and 4) provide information as to the origin of those visitors taking a tour.

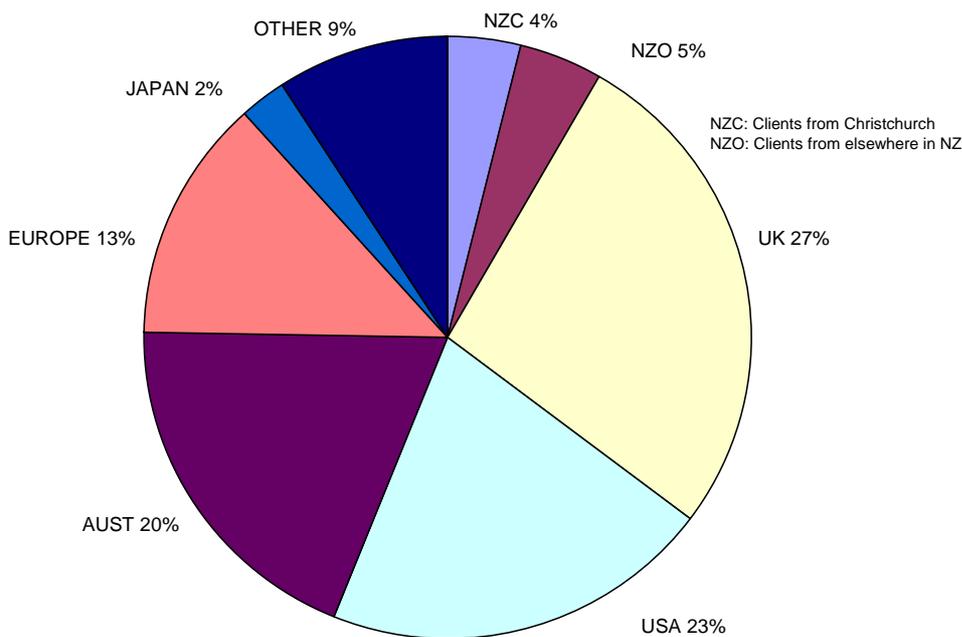


Figure 3: Origin of clients, 2010 - 2011

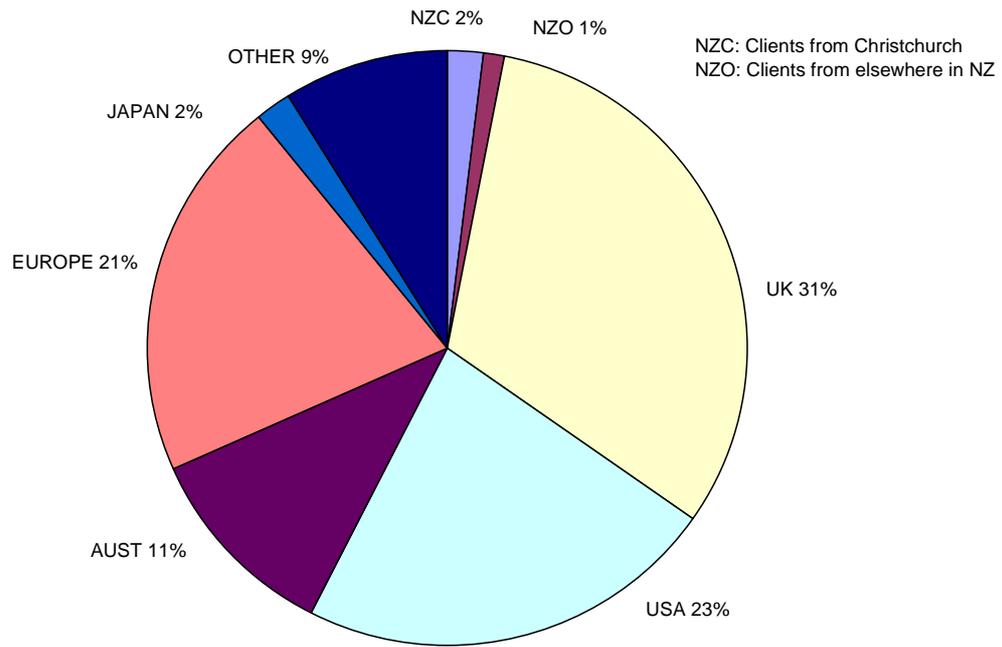


Figure 4: Origin of clients, 2011 - 2012

In both seasons, the principal origins of those taking a tour were the United Kingdom, Australia, Europe and the USA. This was the situation in the two seasons prior to the earthquakes (see table); after the earthquakes, there was possibly a decrease in the percentage of visitors from the USA and an increase in the percentage from Europe.

Origin of guided visitors: percent of numbers taking walking tour

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
UK	26	29	27	31
USA	30	29	21	23
AUSTRALIA	14	15	20	11
EUROPE	11a	8	13	21

a. the estimate of European visitors arrived at by subtracting 'Asian' from 'Other'

Only time will tell if the number of visitors who wish to take a walking tour in the Gardens will return to levels seen prior to the earthquakes.

Look at that tree – Akeake *Dodonea viscosa* ‘Moonbeam’

I guess we are all familiar with the New Zealand native ake ake or *Dodonea viscosa*. A fascinating story about *Dodonea* and its amazingly wide distribution around the world written by Alan Morgan appeared in the Newsletter No 83 in summer 2010/11.

There is an unusual form of this species in the Gardens. It is not the common green-leafed form, nor the well-known purple *D. viscosa* ‘Purpurea’. If you cross the bridge into the Gardens from the tennis courts and turn right to follow the path along the river bank you will come across a specimen of the cultivar ‘Moonbeam’. While clearly a *D. viscosa* it is distinguished by having variegated green and creamy-white leaves. I am not a great fan of shrubs or trees with variegated leaves but ‘Moonbeam’ is in my view is exceptional and very attractive. A specimen set among plain green neighbouring plants or viewed on a sunless grey day really stands out.



Dodonea viscosa ‘Moonbeam’

Like the green and purple forms ‘Moonbeam’ is a tough and hardy small tree although it must be admitted the specimen in the Gardens has been foreshortened. For some reason the trunks have been trimmed above head height. Was it damaged in a snow storm?

The cultivar originated as a mutation of the green form. The mutation was discovered in his nursery by Hamilton plantsman, the late M F Geenty. Mr Geenty was able to develop the mutation into the stable cultivar which he named ‘Moonbeam’. In 1982 ‘Moonbeam’ was protected under a grant of plant variety rights (PVR). The PVR could have remained in force for 23 years but it was cancelled in 1992 after only 10 years.

As with most such variegated plants the only way of propagating new plants of ‘Moonbeam’ was by vegetative means. Apparently however difficulties arose in the propagation to the extent that the cultivar was not commercially viable. As a result one can no longer obtain plants of this attractive cultivar and specimens such as that in the Gardens are now a rarity.

Bill Whitmore

Friends News

BGs are big on big acronyms. So let's untangle a few. By Alan Morgan Sec FOBG Committee

BGANZ. Botanic Gardens Australia New Zealand Inc.

That is fairly self-explanatory and provides a forum for staff and associates from Botanic Gardens across both countries. They have a congress every two years, the next one in Dunedin in October 2013 (Dunedin Botanic's 150th anniversary year too). The committee is made up primarily of a representative from each Australian state and two from New Zealand.

Check out BGANZ at www.bganz.org.au

BGCI. Botanic Gardens Conservation International

This is a world-wide organization of Botanic Gardens with the prime focus on conservation. It started in 1987 and has grown to have over 700 member Gardens in 118 countries. Its patron is Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales. They have a congress every two years and the next one will also be in Dunedin combined with the BGANZ congress.

Check out BGCI at www.bgci.com

AFBG Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc

This is an Australian based organization to which the Christchurch 'Friends' belong. It has 49 member Botanic Gardens in Australia and only two in NZ. It too has a biennial conference, the next being in Port Augusta in South Australia, 18-19 August 2012 with the theme of 'Mangroves, Myalls and More'. They would love to have at least one Kiwi attend - anyone interested please contact the writer (see below)

Check out the AFBG at www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

AVGBG Australasian Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens

This remarkable organization doesn't actually exist but it has amazing conferences every two years. The next conference will be held next year in Christchurch organised by us as part of the 150th anniversary of the Gardens. At that conference we will hand the baton on to the next group of volunteer guides, the Sydney Botanic Gardens Guides, to host the 2015 event. While most guiding groups are part of their 'Friends' organization, not all are. And some gardens don't have guides, hence the separation from the AFBG. It all works beautifully – and there's no website. The conference runs from Monday evening to Friday noon and is made up of walks and talks, guest speakers, workshops, a choice of three full day tours and lots of social interaction. The conference is timed to follow on from the BGANZ/BGCI conference in Dunedin so conference junkies can attend both and we will hopefully be able to attract some top-flight speakers from amongst the delegates.

The conference organising committee has some opportunities to get involved. We believe in defining jobs and allowing members 'to get on with it' without interminable committee meetings. So if you would like to hear more contact me, Alan Morgan - 384 9976 or a.morgan@xtra.co.nz

Other 150th celebrations – help needed'

The possibility of a reunion of past, and present, staff members as part of the celebrations has been mooted. This is not really a function of the Friends but it may need a nudge from us to make it happen. A good start would be to develop a data base of past staffers and for this we need a computer literate person to collate information from various sources and to do some sleuthing to fill the gaps. Organising the reunion will be up to the ex staffers.

If this sounds like you....call Alan Morgan as above

Events in the Gardens

From Lynda Burns, Visitor Services, CCC Botanical Services. 941 7585 or 027 559 0181.

Coming events include:

Survive! Winter in the Gardens discovery trail.

Follow the clues to explore our winter wonderland. On the way, discover how the creatures and plants living in the Gardens survive the winter.

Saturday 30 June to Sunday 15 July.

Suitable for 4 – 10 year olds. Pick up the treasure hunt map from inside the Botanic Gardens Information Centre, 10am – 4pm daily.

Vegetable gardens workshop.

Rhys Taylor, sustainability educator, will use the Curator's House Garden to inspire new and experienced vegetable gardeners.

Saturday 8th September, 1.00 – 4.00pm.

Enrol now for a limited place. Bookings essential, with pre-payment of \$20.00 through the Botanic Gardens Information Centre. Phone: 941 7590 or christchurchbotanicgardens@ccc.govt.nz. Payment by cheque, cash, credit card or Eftpos at the Centre.

Festival of Flowers Spring event.

Daffodil Woodland.

Sunday 16 September - rain date Sunday 23 September.

Enjoy a range of musicians performing throughout the middle of the day in celebration of spring.

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The vegetable and herb garden

Have you visited the vegetable / herb garden recently? You should.

In earthquake-ravished Christchurch where devastation and demolition seem to prevail it is heart warming to see the developments that Louise Young has been making in the vegetable and herb garden area beside the Curator's House.

When I visited in April I saw types of vegetables that I had never seen before. Have you come across Malabar spinach? Or seen peanuts growing? There is always something to intrigue you.



Oh, and the good news is that the Curator's House café and restaurant should re-open in October.

Bill Whitmore