

QUARTERLY NEWS LETTER

Vol. 5, No. 4

September, 1948

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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Spring is with us once more, and with it the Cheeseman Memorial Flower Show. The Show will be somewhat smaller this year, and below, Mr. Cooper, the Museum Botanist, reviews its development to date and discusses its future. The views of members are invited.

THE CHEESEMAN SHOW

Miss Crookes has asked me to write a few notes on the show this year. The 13th Annual Cheeseman Memorial Show of Native Flowers will be opened at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, 25th September 1948, in the main entrance of the Museum by Mrs. V.J. Chapman. The show is held each year in memory of Thomas F. Cheeseman, who was curator of the Museum for nearly fifty years. He was appointed to the old Museum in Princes Street when it opened in 1874. He worked under handicaps, far from libraries and the great herbaria of the world; but his Manual is still the final authority on N.Z. flowering plants. He also made a number of contributions to our knowledge of N.Z. zoology and ethnology, and with small staff and funds built up the Museum exhibits and collections. He died in October 1923 and 10 years later Miss Lucy Cranwell organised the first native flower show at the new War Memorial Museum.

The Show has grown steadily in size, the main sections being school competitions, decorative work and special exhibits. The number of school children taking part has increased considerably since the war and more than ever before are expected this year.

In the early years a willing band of helpers formed the Auckland Botanical Society which has played a leading role in the show ever since. The more recently formed Auckland Section of the Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Titirangi Beautifying Society, and the Auckland City Council have also played a part in the success of the show. Outside Auckland friends have drawn heavily on their gardens each year to send us the rare and the unusual.

The societies and clubs taking part this year are the Botanical Society, the Auckland Section of the Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Titirangi Beautifying Society, the Museum Conchology Club and the Museum Boys' Ethnology Club.

Next year I hope that the number of clubs taking part in the show will be larger, as several gardening clubs have expressed the wish to make an exhibit in future, and one of the tramping clubs has recently formed a botanical circle. If more clubs take part and each supplies its own material and undertakes the provision of a special exhibit the running of the show should be simplified and the frequent requests to our friends in both islands, for the best of their garden plants, should be reduced.

The adult section is smaller this year than in the past owing to the steady growth of the children's side, the unavoidable absence of the usual exhibit of the Parks and Reserves Department of the City Council, and the probability that decorative and special exhibits will be required early next year for the Science Congress. It is hoped, however, that the high standard of past shows will be reached,

The exhibits this year include "Families of Flowering Plants" which will try to make clear the relationships of families, and "Plant communities" which is intended to illustrate typical communities of the seashore, the lowlands and the higher hills, and will probably include material from all parts of the country. "Plants of Wellington Province" supplements this. This exhibit of plants peculiar to a province or botanical district can be presented each year without becoming too familiar. "Maori Food Plants" by the Museum Boys' Ethnology Club has been presented before most successfully, but the subject is not exhausted. The themes of the two exhibits of the Auckland Section of the Forest and Bird Protection Society are suggested by the titles "Garden and National Sanctuaries" and "The Economic Value of Birds". The Titirangi Beautifying Society can be relied on to make their tables interesting and decorative. The Botanical Society has the difficult task of converting the entrance to the Cheeseman Hall into a cool forest glade.

Native flower shows are no longer the novelty they were a dozen years ago, and it is difficult to devise new themes for them. Perhaps if more societies and clubs participate in future, however, they will bring us new ideas and show us new ways of demonstrating the interest, beauty and value of native flowers.

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