

Canterbury Botanical Society (NZ) Inc. Sixty-Fifth Annual Report June 2017 – May 2018

Gillian Giller

Officers and Committee (June 2017 – May 2018)

President:	Gillian Giller
Vice-president:	Jason Butt
Secretary:	Alice Shanks
Treasurer (acting):	Gillian Giller
Membership coordinator:	Judy Bugo

Committee: Fay Farrant (minutes secretary), Melissa Hutchison (website manager), Bryony Macmillan (journal proof-reading & newsletter posting), Dean Pendrigh (newsletters), Miles Giller, Paul Maurice, Geoff Henderson, Sarah Wright.

Monthly meeting programme (June 2017 – May 2018)

- June: AGM. Insights from a 25 year mission to increase mistletoe populations in the Wairarapa. Speaker: Trevor Thompson
- July: Flora of the Canary Islands. Speaker: Lea de Nascimento
- August: What is *Senecio glaucophyllus*? Study by Jasmine Liew. Speaker: Dr Pieter Pelsler
- September: Where did the plants of New Zealand come from? Speaker: Dr Matt McGlone
- October: Where was ANDI? Speaker: Dr Richard Holdaway
- November: Why is *Hebe armstrongii* so rare? Speaker: Dr Debra Wotton
- December: Pygmy myosotis. Speaker: Dr Jessie Prebble
- January: The sub-Antarctic Islands in flower. Speakers: Dr Alex Fergus, Dr Melissa Hutchison
- March: Dryland kanuka management and protection from the bottom up. Speaker: Rebecca Dollery
- April: Taxonomic revision of New Zealand *Cardamine* and other new plant species. Speaker: Dr Peter Heenan
- May: Chatham Islands – native flora and weeds. Speaker: Jason Butt

Monthly field trip and camps programme (June 2017 – May 2018)

- June: Collect *Alepis* seed on Canterbury High Plains property. Leader: Alice Shanks

- July: Identifying trees by bark and bud in Christchurch. Leaders: Sarah Wright & Alice Shanks
- August: Rene Orchiston National New Zealand Flax Collection. Katarina Tawiri. Leader: Alice Shanks
- September: Rakaia Gorge. Leaders: Alice Shanks
- October: Cancelled due to unsuitable weather.
- November: Lance McCaskill Scientific Reserve. Leader: Melissa Hutchison
- December: Waipara Gorge Conservation area. Leader: Alice Shanks
- February: Lake Lyndon shore plants. Leaders: Paula Greer & Alice Shanks
- March: Lake Heron tarn turf plants and flowering grasslands. Leader: Alice Shanks
- April: Rakaia Coastal vegetation. Leader: Alice Shanks
- May: Burkes Bush. Leader: Jason Butt

Monthly Evening Speakers

After the AGM, Trevor Thompson gave everyone a fascinating insight into the ways to successfully ‘plant’ the seeds of several mistletoe species. He followed this with a practical demonstration on the trees outside the meeting room and several members joined in the exercise. In July, Lea Nascimento described the five basic vegetation types on the Canary Islands. These included dry pine forests and misty laurel forests. *Phoenix canariensis* is the dominant palm present with the long lived dragon trees being relatively rare now. The following month, Pieter Pelsler presented the results of a study on *Senecio glaucophyllus* by Jasmine Liew. Genetic analysis revealed a tangled web of entities which at that stage had not been given new names. In September, Matt McGlone explained the different pathways that plants had used to arrive in New Zealand. He suggested that we could refer to the NZ forests as ‘oceanic temperate’ rather than ‘Gondwanan’. The next month Richard Holdaway gave us an overview of what his studies have revealed about early New Zealand flora. The historic presence of birds can provide insights into the distribution of associated flora. In November Debra Wotton showed us the results of her studies on *Hebe armstrongii*. She concluded that some shelter improved seedling survival. Ideally new populations need to be established as an insurance policy for the existing ones. Jessie Prebble finished the year with her talk on the beautiful pygmy myosotis. These species which appeared in the flora only about 2 million years ago are classed as naturally uncommon.

The first speakers for 2018 had recently returned from a trip to the Sub-Antarctic Islands. Alex Fergus and Melissa Hutchison showed us some of the many photos they had taken. The weather was great and afforded their group an opportunity to walk amongst the mega herbs in full bloom. Rebecca Dollery talked about a very different environment in March. She studied kanuka and its associates at Eyrewell and the issues involved in trying to restore this complex

ecosystem. Peter Heenan covered three topics in April – 20 years of his work on *Cardamine* species, the *Melicytus obovatus* complex and New Zealand biodiversity hotspots. Peter offered to make the papers to his extensive work available to those interested. Jason Butt finished the year outlining his work on the Chatham Islands in preventing or eliminating invasive plant species. *Gunnera tinctoria* (Chilean rhubarb) appears to be an achievable goal to eliminate but 80 hectares of *Ugni molinae* (Chilean guava) presents a harder challenge.

Monthly field trips

The day after the AGM in June, a group of members accompanied Trevor to a property with the intention to collect yellow mistletoe seed to establish on other sites. Alas the birds had beaten us. The July field trip down the Opawaho Heathcote River, started at the Ashgrove Reserve and finished at Ernle Clark Reserve. Winter buds and bark were examined but there were also observations on what species were planted and their long term prospects. In August the Rene Orchiston harakeke collection was visited. Members were shown the many varieties and their uses. A cold northwest wind was funnelling through the gorge when we visited in September. Good numbers of *Pseudopanax ferox* (fierce lancewood) and *Anemanthele lessoniana* (wind grass) were seen and there was discussion about the proliferation of sycamore in some areas. Rain in October led to the cancellation of the field trip but November dawned fine for the planned weed control with Danny Kimber at the Lance McCaskill Scientific Reserve. In the afternoon the group visited the Enys Scientific Reserve to see the *Hebe armstrongii* with Debra Wotton. A hot northwest day greeted those who embarked on the December field trip to a reserve in the Waipara Gorge. A good population of *Korthasella salicornioides* ‘Threatened - Nationally Critical’ was seen.

In February shore plants at Lake Lyndon were examined as well as the adjacent shrublands. *Carex resectans* and *Carex colensoi* were found. The following month the kettlehole areas at Lake Heron revealed a good display of *Gentianella corymbifera* subsp. *gracilis* in flower. The day ended viewing *Helichrysum depressum* growing on the banks of the Haketere River. In April, after assembling at the South Rakaia Huts, members walked southwards along the beach until a small population of *Poa billardierei* ‘At Risk - Declining’ was found. After lunch, spent sitting on the cushion mounds of *Muehlenbeckia complexa* on the dunes, the group drove further south to look at a donga (coastal gully) and the coastline. A *Leptinella* species (yet to be identified) was found and *Tetragonia tetragonioides* ‘At Risk - Naturally Uncommon’. The final trip for the year was on the Port Hills at Burkes Bush. The vegetation is responding now that it is fenced. The 2017 fires came within 20 metres of the area. *Brachyglottis sciadophila* can now be found rambling on the forest floor.

There was no summer camp held this year due to a low numbers of participants wanting to attend. The committee decided to cancel the usual Society spring camp as several members wished to attend the NZPCN conference in Hokitika in November.

Two working bees were held at Rakaia Gorge controlling sycamores and other weeds surrounding a large mataī. There was also a working bee at Lance McCaskill Scientific Reserve weeding around the special plants.

Submissions and Correspondence

Melissa and Alice wrote submissions to the DoC Threatened Species Strategy. Jason has continued to follow up on the progress being made on protecting the Te Pirita dryland vegetation. Protection for this area has not been achieved yet.

Awards

Di Carter was awarded the Senior Bledisloe Trophy for her work as a Park Ranger for the Christchurch City Council. Anna Henderson was awarded the Junior Bledisloe for her studies on birds in North Canterbury forest remnants. There was no Student Grant awarded this year as there were no applicants. There was also no prize given at the Science Fair.

Membership

Membership has remained stable over the last year with resignations equalling new members. We currently have 196 members which includes 8 Life Memberships.

We lost three long standing members of the Society. Lawrie Metcalf passed away in August last year, John Lovis the following month, and Bill Sykes in January this year. All three contributed to the Society over the years including writing articles for the Journal. Ferns featured in the articles that John wrote for the Society's Journal. Several adventive species were mentioned in the articles Bill wrote. As well as articles of a botanical nature, Lawrie also wrote about the history of the Society.

The Journal

It is interesting to note that the majority of members still prefer to receive their Journal as a hard copy rather than electronically. Back copies (up to Journal 38) can be viewed on the NZPCN website. Production of the Journal has been delayed the last two years but the committee plan to get back up to speed for the next issue. If all goes according to plan then Journal 50 will be produced in 2019. I wonder if those members who produced the first Journal in 1968 ever

thought that half a century later it would still be a valuable part of the Society's achievements. A wonderful collection of knowledge has been built up.

Committee

The 2016 - 2017 committee was re-elected at the AGM last year with Paula Greer also joining the committee. Sarah Wright stood down from the Treasurer's position. This vacancy was not filled at the AGM but the Society has continued to meet its financial reporting obligations as a registered charity. Thank you to all the committee members and those members outside committee who have helped with the running of the Society. The committee meetings tend to have a full agenda but every effort is made to have all business dealt with by 9 pm so we can relax and have a chat and cuppa.

The Society is 65 years old now but there are no plans to slow down and rest on past achievements. In 1978 Lawrie Metcalf wrote when describing the membership that "*...membership of the Society now comprises of a happy mixture, ranging from the top professional to the rankest of amateurs.*" The same 'happy mixture' still exists today and hopefully this will help to ensure that in 10 years' time there will be a 75th to celebrate.

Gillian Giller - June 2018