

Canterbury Botanical Society (NZ) Inc.

Sixty-seventh Annual Report

June 2019 – May 2020

Officers and Committee

President: Paula Greer

Vice-President: Jason Butt

Secretary: Fay Farrant

Treasurer: Gillian Giller

Membership co-ordinator: Judy Bugo / Gillian Giller

Committee: Melissa Hutchison (website manager), Bryony Macmillan (journal proof reading & newsletter posting), Dean Pendrigh (newsletters), Alice Shanks (programme co-ordinator) Miles Giller, Sarah Wright.

Monthly meeting programme

- June – AGM. **Wolfgang Bopp**, Director, Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Wolfgang gave us an introduction to himself and the gardens he has worked in. This talk gave many of us ideas for future travel or thoughts of how the Botanic Gardens might change under his leadership, with which we wish him well.
- July – **Nick Dickinson**, Professor of Ecology, Lincoln University, led us on a trip underground to the importance of roots and how this often overlooked part of plants can help us with planting plans and restorations.
- August – **Dave Kelly**, University of Canterbury gave us an update on his and colleagues' masting studies in *Chionochloa pallens*, *Leucogenes* and *Celmisa lyallii*. The research has covered temperature differences, edge effects and soil fertility differences, the conclusion being that although all these contribute to changes in flowering times, and flower development, the main contributor is summer temperature. This leads to how climate change will impact on the masting of these plants and others in the future.
- September – **Melanie Lapointe**, Wildlands ecologist. Melanie took us on a tour of Canada's sugar maple forests understorey, an interesting journey to a protected area that is surrounded by urban living, with a wide range of plants. Stunning pictures and an interesting talk.
- October – **Samarth Samarth**, University of Canterbury PhD candidate. Samarth was finally able to give his talk "The Molecular drivers for mast flowering and the implications for climate change", which challenged many in the audience and surprised us with the technical sophistication involved.

- November – **Paul Maurice**, CBS member. Paul gave us the chance to view his amazing photos of his “Botanical Tour of the Celestial Silk Road”. Paul gave a simple geography and cultural history tour along with his amazing photos.
- December – **Peter Heenan**, Botanist. Peter launched his book “Conserving the plants of eastern South Island limestone, Nga Tipu o te Pakeho”. There was a large turn-out for this evening with over half of the membership present for a journey through the east coast limestone flora, plus a book to take home.
- February – **Carlos Lehnebach**, Te Papa Tongarewa, Botany Curator. Carlos’s talk on NZ orchids provided us with information about how these plants are still in the process of being identified, which is hard due to the challenges of preservation. The processes that are used by the plant to attract pollinators and the levels of insect or plant imitation that orchids go to were fascinating.
- March – **Santiago Bravo**, a visiting academic from Spain, talked us through the reason for the variety in the Spanish flora. This was in part due to the geography, Spain being located close to Africa and the southernmost part of Europe.
- April-May – Covid-19 levels 4, 3 and 2 were in place and we were unable to meet.
- June – no June meeting was held to let everyone get used to being able to mix freely and out of Covid-19 lockdown.

Monthly field trips

- July – Brooklands Lagoon. A small group met to discover the changes at Brooklands Lagoon. This botanising walk led us through history and the many interactions that humans and weather have had or tried to have on the moving river (Waimakariri) and sea current. Well worth the trip.
- August – Broadfields Garden. This trip turned into an exciting one on a drizzly day. A wide variety of members turned out for a journey through an architectural garden made up of New Zealand natives and bargain bin plants that gave us all many ideas to take away for the use of natives in formal gardens and the mixing of species. A great place to visit.
- September – Mid-Rakaia recent river terrace vegetation, Sleemans Road to Te Piritia Road. This was a fun trip with a mix of off-roading and surprising botanical finds with the discovery of several patches of native remnants (including climbers) that have survived floods, farming and river engineers.
- October – Long Bay Scenic Reserve. This trip only attracted five of the hardiest members, despite it being the best day to see the highest waterfall on Banks Peninsula full of water. *Clematis foetida* was out in flower, while a patch of the tiny spider orchid (*Corybas rivulare*) were sighted. A clump

of hairy fern (*Lastreopsis hispida*) was the largest anyone has seen on the Peninsula.

- November – Motu Kānuka Scientific Reserve. This was a chance to visit a new DOC reserve (encouraged by a CBS visit in 1995) and help create a species list. Although close to Eyrewell Scientific Reserve (as the bird flies), this dryland kānuka reserve was at a later stage with a wider range of species and some garden escapes (native) making it into the reserve.
- December – Rockwood. It was a four-car convoy into rain, high winds and lightning that saw us start our trip with a civilised morning tea at Terrace Downs before heading into the clearing rain and strong wind for the trip up to Rockwood. The wind blasted the cobwebs away and the matagouri gave us some shelter from it. We managed to find some surprising plants hiding in plain sight. The side trips home were thwarted by the Rakaia in flood.
- January – no summer camp was held this year.
- February – Williams and Lakeside Wildlife Management Reserves. This trip led us to reserves on the western edge of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. These reserves were in different stages with some areas just planted while the older areas showed signs of regeneration and overtopping some of the weed species still growing.
- March – May – Covid-19 levels 4 to 2 were in place and we were unable to meet.
- June – No June trip as we adjusted to mixing freely, and getting further from home.

Awards

Peter Joyce was awarded the Senior Bledisloe Trophy for his assistance to Jan Chaffey and the Sculpture Park Garden. Special prizes of native trees were given in the 2019 Westland/Canterbury Science Fair this year as two entrants used native plants in their experiments that were outside our specific guidelines.

Leo Sharpe, Heathcoate Valley School, used native plants for flavour in kombucha; and

Sylvie King, Selwyn House, studied the growth reactions of native plants to different light spectra created by street lighting.

Membership

At the end of June there were 189 members including nine Life Members. There were 12 new members and 13 resignations. Our current average age has decreased this year.

Canterbury Botanical Society Journal

The 50th journal was released in February. The issues of pest plants and biosecurity has been well received both within the Society and by the public with several orders of copies. Thank you to John Clemens for editing our Journal issues and for sourcing and chasing up article authors.

The 2020 Journal Issue 51 is well advanced in terms of articles received and editing. It is back to a more familiar format this year, with a wide variety of articles from members and associated professionals.

Committee

The committee started off with a good eight months of our trips being well attended and some enjoyable meetings that both stretched our minds and gave us some amazing pictures to look at. Then came Covid-19 with all of us limited in travel and, for most, working from home, or in Alice's case discovering the joys of house maintenance. The discovery of Skype, Zoom and virtual team meetings created new aspects to many of our working and social lives. The Committee meetings were interesting as our time was limited (initially as we thought it was on Zoom), then different connections changed the sound of people, while others worked out how to use their equipment just before the end of meetings. It was a period of change, compromises and a lesson for all of us.

Hopefully the 2020/21 year will be as full of learning without the limitations.

Paula Greer