

thriving and sporting numerous buds that would soon open into fragrant, tubular red flowers.

Lovers of moist feet, kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*), maire (*Syzygium maire*, formerly *Eugenia maire*), bog pine (*Halocarpus bidwillii*) and a knee-less pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*) were very much at home in a damp streamside site. Nearby, a metal Kermit the Frog positioned in a small pond, entertained the youngest visitor. A dragon with a most soulful expression stood guard nearby.

Thank you Chuck and Carol for sharing your enthusiasm and vision for your eclectic plant collections with us.

Truby King Reserve

Allison Knight

From Chuck and Carol's fragrant gardens we drove up the hill to another Enchanted Forest, at the nearby Seacliff Reserve, site of the former Seacliff Mental Hospital. Here Chuck showed us a collection of magnificent mature trees, exotic and native, that were planted during Sir Truby King's reign as superintendent from 1889 – 1920. The palatial, Lawson-designed hospital buildings were unfortunately built on geologically unstable ground. They were built first in brick, then in wood, and when that too succumbed to the slumping the hospital was abandoned in 1973 and the spacious grounds overlooking the sea fell into disrepair. Now the plantings are slowly being rescued from the wilderness by the combined forces of the Truby King Recreation Reserve Committee and the DCC, with the help of Task force Green and Horticulture students from the Polytech.

The highlight for me was coming round a corner and seeing in full bloom the magnolia that Janet Frame had written about in *Faces in the Water*. Only recently it was rescued from being almost totally overgrown. In her book Janet vividly describes the excitement of going for a walk in the grounds and seeing "the magnolia tree (the pride of the hospital) in bloom".

Chuck generously provided notes on the history of the hospital, a map showing the tracks and the most significant large trees, as well as species lists of exotic shrubs and small trees and native trees, shrubs and climbers. These lists are filed in the Otago Herbarium. Chuck is still adding to this list as more species come into flower and fruit, and would welcome further observations.

So do contact him if you're going there – it's well worth a visit!

Carmichaelia williamsii
(Giant flowered broom), in full flower this late September trip.
Conservation Requirements of New Zealand's Nationally Threatened Vascular Plants. DoC 1999

