

**Featuring:** *Wildflowers - eradicate or value?*  
*Friend Lindsay Poole*  
*Pine Nuts – the tree and the recipe*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

We're still reserving space for a President and his or her comments...  
*Meanwhile*, The Acting President has something important to say:

In this issue we've set out the year's programme for the FOBG members, friends and the general public. Please give this programme all the support possible. After all, it is for you.

*Richard Nanson*

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## **WINTER SERIES SEMINARS**

**\$10 all-day or part thereof. Lunch \$5**

**Wellington Botanic Gardens Tree House**

Bookings essential – book at Treehouse reception phone 499 1400

**Sunday 8 June 9.30am - 3.30pm**

### **SENSIBLE ORGANICS THE PRACTICAL WAY**

Hear about, understand and ask any questions about the following papers:

*Practical organics - what is practical, what is not?*

*Organic soil management - looking after your soil the organic way.*

*Composting- hot or cold - with or without air?*

*Permaculture - what is it - is it possible in the urban garden?*

*Worm culture - are these critters really helpful?*

*Pests, diseases and pitfalls - to spray or not to spray?*

*Educating our teachers and ourselves.*

There will be stalls and exhibitors - and plenty of time for discussion and questions.

**Sunday 13 July 9.30am - 3.30pm**

*Propagation and care of plants and plant collections in the Botanic Gardens.*

see 'Coming Events' on P8 for more Friends activities

## Point Of View

### *Winsome Shepherd wades into the wildflowers versus natives debate*

*Wellington's Heritage* includes a chapter on the wildflowers of Wellington. One photo (page 213), taken from Raroa Road, looks down the steep slope above the Karori tunnel to the road below and features the marguerite daisy *Argyranthemum frutescens*. This was not the only wildflower in this particular area – there were many others between late October and Christmas, including beautiful foxgloves. It looked promising as further plants established there.

Not everyone appreciated this colourful display. Last year the native plants ti kouka and harakeke replaced the wildflowers and the intention is to plant more natives, including kowhai.

The question must be asked: Are there places, such as this spot above the Karori tunnel, where the wildflowers of Wellington can be allowed to grow? For a brief period they bring such a splash of colour to brighten the city verges. Must everything be planted in natives? This would have been an ideal spot to allow a mix of both.

The problem last year was aggravated by the Council cutting the vegetation on banks above the roads in November and December, a factor detrimental to next season's flowering.

What are your thoughts?

[An opportunity not to be missed, so here are my thoughts on the matter – I find this natives-only purism quite strange, given the beauty we miss out on if we don't allow imported wildflowers to flourish in places where they do no harm but instead nourish the spirit. In the southern suburbs areas recovering from gorse fires and clearances are colonised by the mauve holly-leaved senecio, *Senecio glastifolius*, which puts on a spectacular, blazing display for one season. Since this plant doesn't appear to be able to compete with anything but bare ground it doesn't seem to be much of a threat and I for one would be poorer for never having witnessed its beauty en masse. If the people of this country can (usually) co-exist, why can't the plants? Ed]

## Floristically challenged native plants

*Coincidentally, Derrick Rooney has been thinking about native vs exotic trees. This from the latest issue of the RNZIH 'New Zealand Garden Journal'.*

There's a big fashion at present for planting native trees, and sometimes I think that people promoting this fashion are a little like horses wearing blinkers.

It just doesn't make sense, from either a horticultural or silvicultural viewpoint, to push indigenous trees into gardens and public parks at the expense of the best introduced ones.

It is true that New Zealand has a distinctive flora, of sorts, with a relatively large number, compared with the total flora, of species that do not occur anywhere else. But this is largely a consequence of New Zealand being an isolated group of oceanic islands. When you start looking at the plants as family groups it becomes painfully obvious that while we have numerous endemic species we have very few endemic families.

And the families with ornamental trees that have become icons of New Zealand culture, if you can call it a culture, have by and large attained a much higher degree of development and diversity elsewhere.

Eight species of kowhai, all with yellow flowers, are now recognised in New Zealand, seven of them capable of reaching tree size and the other a shrub. Elsewhere in the world there are upwards of 50 more species in the genus *Sophora*, ranging from sub-shrubs with blue or mauve flowers to forest giants with white ones.

New Zealand has a few species of pohutukawa, a few of rata, one, or more likely several, of kanuka and one of manuka. All these belong to the myrtle family, which in contrast has reached a staggering level of diversity across the Tasman, with 700 or more eucalypts, a number of other closely related trees, at least 50 cousins of the manuka and 30 or so cousins of the kanuka, mostly with larger and more colourful flowers than the New Zealand species. As a floristic experience, the New Zealand flora is, well, a couple of spoons short of a picnic.

I've been racking my brains for names of native flowering trees to match the beauty and adaptability of the magnolias and cherries of Japan, the horse-chestnuts of Europe and the Himalayas, the tulip tree of North America, the judas tree of the eastern Mediterranean, the rhododendrons of the Himalaya and Yunnan, the dove-tree of China, the dogwoods of North America.

What have we got? The pohutukawa is strictly for frost-free districts near the sea, the southern rata is painfully slow and unpredictable, and neither stacks up against the pink flowering gums of Australia. The rewarewa, one of our two representatives of the protea family, is simply outclassed by its Australian and South African relatives.

The kowhai can be pretty trees, and probably every garden should have at least one, but as flowering leguminous trees go, they lack the floristic brilliance, not to mention the autumn colour, of the judas tree or the redbuds of North America.

But wait, there's more. New Zealand's flora may be floristically-challenged, but it has other values. The key word is foliage.

For foliage and textural effects, there are some spectacular native plants: the flaxes, the cabbage trees, the lancewoods, the tree ferns, the broadleaves and plants like the puka and the nikau palm for warmer areas. Climate permitting, any or all of these are important ingredients in garden plans, both on their own terms and as complements to the flowers from abroad.

So if you are planning a garden this winter, by all means include a few distinctive native foliage plants. They have an important place. Just try not be sucked in to the philosophy that natives are the best thing since sliced bread. The plain fact is that most of them lack flower power.

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*Author Derrick Rooney is a retired professional journalist who for many years wrote feature articles for Christchurch's "The Press", specialising in forestry, natural history, and rural affairs. He is a life member of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture and a past chairman of the Central Canterbury Farm Forestry Association, and currently edits "Indigena", the journal of the Indigenous Forests Section of the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association.*

## Profile of a Gardener – Lindsay Poole

Friends member Lindsay Poole still knows exactly how his life-long interest in plants began. He lived with an aunt in Rotorua for a couple of his childhood years. “She was a great gardener and knew an awful lot about plants,” says Lindsay. So much, in fact, that Duncan and Davies used to consult her. “And that’s where my interest in horticulture and botany started,” he says.

After a secondary education at King’s College, Lindsay landed a Forest Products’ forestry scholarship and did a degree in forestry at Auckland University, finishing it as the depression began.

Depression notwithstanding, Lindsay was never out of work, starting as a technical trainee at a nursery and member of the Forest Service. “While I was working in the middle of the booi,” says Lindsay, he was advised to apply for a job at the Botany Division of the DSIR, and thus began a career which took him to the very top of the NZ Forest Service. It also took him round the world, resulted in the publication of numerous papers (about 100, he thinks) and several books and led to society presidencies, board memberships and honours.

Lindsay’s association with the Friends started while he was with the Botany Division; he spent a year in Wellington and had digs near the Botanic Garden, visiting often. “I think they’re wonderful gardens and getting better and better,” says Lindsay. “I knew Kew fairly well,” he adds, “and I believe the Wellington Garden can be the best in the world.”

While with the DSIR Lindsay surveyed and worked on ragwort control, then flax, playing a crucial role during WW2, when hemp supplies for wool packs became unavailable. Thanks in no small part to Lindsay’s thesis investigations, flax was used for wool packs here during the war. “Flax has marvellous fibre and should be used more,” he says.



Lindsay joined the Army (15<sup>th</sup> Forestry Company, NZE 2<sup>nd</sup> Echelon) and travelled to England, working with the Scientific Liaison Office in London for most of the war. While there he popped into the DSIR’s London division for a chat. They offered him a job, which he declined. “I’m in the Army and I get better pay and better fed,” he told them. He went all over the British Isles, mainly testing NZ strains of pasture clover and grass. Endlessly keen and interested in his subject, Lindsay met scientists in the Forces from New Zealand and the wider Commonwealth and somehow found the time to attend Royal Society and Linnaean Society meetings as well. He remembers this time as “the most widening period I have ever had in science.”

After the war he joined the Military Government occupation of Germany (equivalent rank of Colonel), working with the German Forest Service. He says it was the best ‘forestry’ year he ever had, seeing the German operation and the extent to which they put wood to use – food, fuel, housing, explosives. The Germans had effectively built their war effort on forestry, according to Lindsay, starting ten years before the war did.

In 1947 he returned to New Zealand and the Botany Division, as Assistant Director, becoming Director two years later. In 1951 the position of Assistant Director, NZ Forest Service was vacant and after

persistent requests, "I was happy where I was," Lindsay says, he applied. "There was a muck-up and I got the job." Undoubtedly not true, because he was a well-liked and respected Forest Service Assistant Director for ten years and Director-General for a further ten.

Lindsay has been an active member of the Friends, NZ Institute of Forestry, The Royal Society of NZ, Ecological Society, Wellington Botanical Society, and the Linnaean Society of London.

He is a CBE, Doctor (honorary Doctorate of Science awarded in 1999; Lindsay has an M.Sc. in his own right), Associate of Honour of the Royal Institute of Horticulture, a Fellow of the Royal Society and Kirk Medal recipient, just a few of the honours bestowed on him. You won't hear about them for from Lindsay though, because, accomplishments aside, he is modest and a gentleman.

As for his own gardens, Lindsay says he moved around a lot, making it hard to establish a garden. "I had quite a good garden when I lived in Wadestown," he told me; no doubt with typical understatement. His garden is now much smaller and, of necessity, manageable, but "I prefer getting out in the garden to doing housework," he says, a sentiment all Friends probably share.

Other interests include a lovely and eclectic art collection, begun during the war, where, as a non-smoker, he was sometimes able to swap his substantial cigarette allowance for works of art.

Lindsay's many publications include papers and addresses on topics ranging from *Southern Beech Flowering Seasons* to *Nazi Influence on German Forest Administration* to *No Place for Animals in Eroded High Country* to *Wonderful Waikato Water*. He edited the NZ Institute of Forestry Journal for three years (not surprisingly he is now an honorary member) and has made time to write or co-write seven books, among them *Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand* (1963, with renowned botanical artist Nancy Adams), to this day a valuable reference; *Southern Beeches* (1987) and *Tomorrow's Trees* (1992, with photographer John Johns).

"When I was 90 I was still scribbling," says Lindsay. That scribble is the book *Trees, Timber and Tranquility*, a fascinating autobiography (containing much more detail than we can fit in here) well worth reading. "I'm out of writing now," he claims, smiling, "but... I'm thinking about – maybe – doing another book."

Lindsay is now 95 – and still going strong. "My doctor finds out what's wrong and fixes it," he says, almost as if his body is an independent entity.

Lindsay Poole – a truly remarkable man. There isn't the space here to do justice to the adventures, knowledge and opinions of this remarkable man – and of a life lived for nigh on a century there is much to report.

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### Amber No Mosaic



Production problems with the last newsletter muddied the photos a bit. Here's Marketing Co-ordinator Amber Wilkie's true face.



### Tulip Sunday plant sales - October

**Would members please grow as many plants as possible for this fund raising day.**

## Man In The Trees - *Pinus pinea*

From **Philip Tomlinson's** notes for his *Man In The Trees* guided walk around Botanic Garden trees, we present a culinary member of the *Pinus* genus. And as such we thought we'd better include a recipe, albeit the obvious one.

The **Mediterranean Stone Pine** is also known in older publications as the umbrella pine (obsolete). It is two-needled. It is found from Portugal to Syria, although originally is thought to have come from the Iberian Peninsula, the only area where it is found away from the main trade routes, being introduced into many areas by primitive man.

Pine cones were incorporated into the designs of many ancient amulets and had a phallic meaning. They were regarded as symbols of fertility and even now the tops of wooden bedposts are often embellished with carved pinecones, many of which can be identified as being based on *Pinus pinea*. There is a large Roman fountain in the shape of the giant bronze pinecone, believed to be of this species, cast in the first century AD. It is now in the Vatican Museum in the Cortile della Pigna, the courtyard of the pinecone. *P. pinea* cones are featured in paintings and sculpture and in mosaics in the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

*Pinus pinea* was the first pine used and cultivated by man, its edible seeds having been harvested for perhaps half a million years or more. Its seeds have been used for food by prehistoric man, shells being found at many prehistoric sites, and are believed to have been widely traded. In ancient Rome a wine was made from the nuts and evidence from Pompeii indicated it was widely used in cooking. The Romans referred to it as the 'Domestic Pine'. More

than 4,000 years ago the Egyptians wrote about trees being transported with a ball of soil around their roots, some specimens being moved 2,400 kilometres by boat.

The tree has been cultivated for well over 6,000 years, and possibly for 12,000 to 15,000 years. It is commonly found along the old trade routes. It continues to be widely cultivated through the Mediterranean area, the richly flavoured seeds essential for many Portuguese, Spanish and Italian recipes. Its timber is used occasionally, but the trees are normally reserved for their value as a food source.

The protein content of some pine nuts exceeds that of all other commercial nuts except the cashews, and is comparable to that of beefsteak. The protein quality is also very high.

Each cone produces approximately 50 nuts, and a pure stand will produce 500 kg cones per hectare per year, which will give around 100 kg of nuts. The nuts are protected by a very hard shell, but can be released by placing them in a warm oven where they will split open.

The tree has an interesting and distinctive flattened crown, like an umbrella, and a straight though often leaning trunk. It can cope with extremes of heat and drought, though it is often stunted in the wild. Its globe-like cones are shiny brown. The bark is reddish-grey and furrowed. It can reach a height of 25 m (80 feet).

### Pesto

4 peeled cloves garlic  
4 cups fresh basil  
½ cup pine nuts  
½ cup grated parmesan  
½-1 cup olive oil

Process garlic, basil and pine nuts till well-chopped but not pureed. Add parmesan and olive oil and process till well mixed. Add salt to taste.

1 cup drained sun-dried tomatoes and 1 tbs balsamic vinegar can be used instead of basil to make a tasty (not to mention trendy) red pesto.

Lightly toasted pine nuts are a good addition to green or potato salads, and as Philip notes, an essential ingredient in many Mediterranean recipes.

## Cuttings

- The Hon. Marian Hobbs officially opened the Waterfall Viewing Platform at Otari-Wilton's Bush on Valentine's Day. Mayor Kerry Prendergast attended the opening along with representatives from WCC, Otari-Wilton's Bush trustees, guides, hosts and staff.
- Speaking of Valentine's Day, the Friends' evening was very much enjoyed by the few members who attended.
- The Botanic Garden joined in the celebrations of the first annual Herb Awareness Week. Visitors to the Garden enjoyed the recipe give-aways, the herb plant and merchandise sale and a display in the Treehouse. Guides gave a tour of the Herb Garden, attracting good numbers.
- The flat deck trolley has been repaired and restored after *thirty-five years* of excellent service. It is now healthy and safe to use!
- The high winds over the last couple of months have kept James and the tree team busy with a Tasmanian Blackwood being up-rooted on the roadway down to the Treehouse, a large limb broken off the English Oak near Anderson

Park and several hanging limbs in the old pines throughout the garden. A large multi-leadered *Pinus radiata* above the lower yard has been removed.

- Work has started on stage one of the Camellia garden up-grade. This work is being funded by the Denton Trust and comprises sump upgrades, path edging and sealing and the rebuilding of a flight of steps.
- Cruise ship season finished in March. The season has been very successful for the Gardens in terms of visitor numbers and shop sales.



*Jenny and Phil guiding tourists*

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## BOARD MEMBER URGENTLY NEEDED

A creative, enthusiastic Friend willing to take over the organisation of the Friends' Promotion Board, providing a change of Board about every three months.

The Board gives the Friends a continuing presence in the Treehouse and is aimed at alerting visitors to our existence and activities, and encouraging new members to join.

You wouldn't be starting from scratch, as there is a considerable stock of photos and negatives to draw on.

It's a creative and rewarding task, and help is available to get you underway.

Please ring Richard Nanson (Phone 477 4020) or Winsome Shepherd (Phone 476 6589) to register your interest or find out more.

## Coming Events 2003

**17 May** 9.30am-2pm  
Berhampore Nursery Open Day  
Emerson Street, Berhampore  
Plant sale, tours, demonstrations and displays.

**May 18** **GW**  
'People and Plants: Survivors in Australia. Part Two. More walking than in Part One, uphill walking included. Meet at the Duck Pond.

**June 5**  
Arbor Day

**June 8**  
**Winter Series Seminar – Sensible Organics The Practical Way.**  
Treehouse 9.30-3.30. Bookings ess.

**June 15** **GW**  
'Trees in the Service of Man: a continuation of our "Man and Trees" walk in 2002.' Meet at the Duck Pond. Little walking involved.

**June 15** 1-3pm  
**Rose Pruning Day**  
Lady Norwood Rose Garden, Wellington Botanic Garden. Rose experts give tips on pruning modern and rambling roses. 1pm modern roses, 2pm old fashioned

**July 13**  
**Winter Series Seminar – Propagation and Care of Plants and Collections.**  
Treehouse 9.30-3.30. Bookings ess.

**July 20** **GW**  
'Plants and Sculptures.' Meet at the Fountain in the Rose Garden. A moderate amount of walking, and uphill walking included.

**August 17** **GW**  
'Historical Nooks and Crannies.'  
A moderate amount of walking, including uphill walking.

**August 21** (Thursday)  
**Friends Annual General Meeting - speaker Kate Kidman.**

**September 7** (Sunday)  
**Friends' Father's Day Spring breakfast, speakers Councillor Alick Shaw and Bill Wieben on 'Roses and Perfumes'.**

**September 21** **GW**  
'Spring Festival Walk.' Easy to moderate walk, on the flat.

**September 28**  
Tulip Sunday

**October 19** **GW**  
'People's Pines: Part of the Past.'  
Meet at the Duck Pond. Moderate walking, some uphill.

***GW = Guided walks, held on the third Sunday of the month at 11am. Unless stated otherwise, the walks begin at the Founders' Entrance, Glenmore Street. If it is wet there will be a talk at the Treehouse Visitor Centre instead.***