

U3A PEGASUS GARDENING GROUP

JULY NEWSLETTER

Greetings to everyone

The weather has certainly been extreme, both here in Aotearoa and in the USA, with terrible devastation and loss of life. The amount of rain which fell is hard to comprehend.

Whilst the weather in Christchurch has been up and down the last several weeks it has been nothing so extreme. The ground is still quite soggy but at least the weeds come out a little easier. Several frosts have been helpful, killing off any nasties lingering on plants – well fingers crossed anyway. After cutting away the large old leaves on the hellebores, the new flower spikes are revealed and are a pretty sight. A few lingering roses on the canes, the daphne is flowering and the camellias are budding up beautifully.

JULY Meeting

Our July meeting is a visit to Fern Factor – 1pm on Monday 28 July at 394 Newtons Road, Templeton, Christchurch. Drive in and park on the gravel area – we will meet there and then go in together. We can car pool – please be in the car park at MPCC by 12.20 to leave at 12.30pm.

Fern Factor are a specialist fern nursery with a huge variety of ferns, including ground ferns, tree ferns, native ferns and exotic ferns. The most ubiquitous plant on the planet is our Rarauwhe, *Pteridium esculentum* or bracken fern, which is found on every continent except Antarctica. Its rhizomes were the traditional food source, Aruhe. It quickly colonises burned or disturbed ground throughout Aotearoa NZ. The visit will be under cover in their greenhouses. We will be able to purchase ferns if we wish.

JUNE Meeting

The June meeting of the Garden Group was a very interesting visit to the Castle Rock Cactus Company which is situated in Horotane Valley. Assisted by helpful and knowledgeable staff the members were free to wander around the very large hot house where a huge variety of plants were growing. Some developing from the seed

stage and others more developed.

A variety of unusual succulent and cactus plants were being transplanted from their starter trays into small pots. The Cactus Company sends their plants all around NZ and you

would see them in Mitre 10, Bunnings, Oderings, etc. The company is happy to have drop-in visitors (for members who didn't make it on the day) and they do have cash purchasing, which I am sure you can imagine the members took full advantage of.



We finished the afternoon with coffee at the Silo Cafe in Heathcote.



MAY Meeting

Our visit this month was to our member, Jane Cowan-Harris' home high up on Clifton Hill. The lane she lives in was developed in the 2000's by an architect who had a vision of a number of environmentally friendly homes. He sold a number of plots of land up to 1800 sq metres which were all to be designed by him with the windows facing north or northwest to capture as much sun as possible.



Jane showed the members around the very undulating garden which a number negotiated and she talked about the many rare trees including fruit trees she had growing. She also had a variety of native plants growing on their property. Jane had planted a cactus garden in front of the window of their lounge and had some very interesting varieties growing. She had an amazing Herbaceous Border with all the plants grouped according to colour from pinks to yellows and there were so many in the border that no weeds could become established. She explained that she had had advice from a colleague at the Botanic Gardens, where she volunteers as a 'Friend of the Botanic Gardens'. Overall, it was a delightful garden to explore.

The Succulent/Cactus Garden

We concluded the afternoon with a delicious array of food. We all enjoyed Jane's loaf which was so delicious, I am sharing it with you as she kindly sent the recipe to me to share. She was a busy lady as she and her husband were departing the next day for Europe for two months so we were very honoured she gave up her precious time for us!

April Followup

For those of you who came to Ali's place in April to watch a demo by Lynne on how to set up a worm farm – Ali has sent through these photos of her new “tenants” with the comment: *Wow... these little wormies have gotten so big and prolific. Very satisfying to see.*



PROGRAMME UPDATE

Below is the programme for 2025

July 28 th	1pm Fern Factor, Templeton
August 25 th	1pm Ann Gain – hanging basket demonstration
September 22 nd	1pm Jo McGirr – taking cuttings and seed raising demo
October 27 th	10.30am Visit to Stoneycrop garden and Rhodo Direct garden, West Melton
November 24 th	12.30pm End of year lunch at “Ambrosia”, Strathlachlan Gardens, Doyleston