



NEW ZEALAND ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY Inc 1960 - 2025

Newsletter

April May 2025

Calendar of Events

May 2025

Botanical Tour to Turkey-
information in the last newsletter

13 July - 65th Anniversary event

31 October - 2 November

Trillium Weekend-Millers Flat
More info
d4rowans@outlook.com

6-7 February 2026

65th Anniversary event

Meeting Information

The Zoom link will open at **7.30pm**.
Some meetings will be
recorded so let us know if you are
interested in a particular topic or if you
missed the meeting.

To join the Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87408735664?pwd=xpFBjBvfmTboglkX7nsaSnxoRj3txR.1>

Meeting ID: 874 0873 5664

Passcode: 105365

**This information is valid for the
whole 2025 year.**

NZ Alpine Garden Society Inc.
PO Box 2984
Christchurch 8140
Email: info@nzags.com



[New Zealand Alpine Garden
Society Group](#)



[nzalpinegarden](#)

Notice of Meetings

Meetings all at Philatelic Centre 67 Mandeville Street
Riccarton Christchurch unless otherwise stated.
The door opens at 7.30pm. Plant sales and library from 7.30pm.
The meeting starts at 8pm.
Entry \$2 includes a lucky number

Guest speakers

8pm 3 April

Professor Hazel Chapman- the Nigerian Montane Forest Project
Supper -Prue Fanselow-Brown Vivien & Gavin Bishop

8pm 1 May

Panel discussion answering your questions on growing alpine. This
will be an informal discussion.
Supper- Carol Halstead Lorraine Thompson

8pm 5 June

Melissa Hutchinson- plant ecologist based in Christchurch. She will
speak to us about the endemic plants of Rakiura/Stewart Island alpine
zones.
Supper- Irene Blair and a helper

The Nigerian Montane Forest Project – a model for conservation

Professor Hazel Chapman from the University of Canterbury will be talking to us about the Nigerian Montane Forest Project, which is based at Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve on the Mambilla Plateau in Nigeria. For over twenty years the Project has combined scientific research with education at tertiary and local community levels to conserve a rare Nigerian afro-montane forest reserve. This work has enabled the Project team to develop a model for long-term sustainable management of forests involving local communities, which is applicable across the world.

Ngel Nyaki is an impressive stand of montane/sub-montane forest, between 1400–1600 metres elevation. It is the most plant species-rich montane forest in Nigeria, with over 24 endangered plant species. It is also home to the endangered Nigerian chimpanzee and other primates, including putty-nosed, Mona and Tantalus monkeys, and an important bird area, recognised by Birdlife International.

The Nigerian Montane Forest Project's mission is to promote national and international commitment to the conservation of Nigeria's montane forests by inspiring excellence in research by postgraduate students and empowering local communities through employment and education.

Chair's Chat

Pauline Murphy

Here in Christchurch summer is nearly over – definitely autumn is creeping up on us....

In February Carol delighted us with her Tibetan trip, where the weather was 'atmospheric' and the array of plants fascinating. The field trip to Cass, although not well attended, was a highlight for me, with a personalised and very informative guided walk through the shrub-line into the beech forest. Thank you, Matt and Jenny.

Our March meeting, held in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens – on a gorgeous balmy evening, was again a very informative guided tour and great venue, thank you Grant.

We are lucky indeed to have such knowledgeable members who are willing to give up their time and to impart their knowledge so freely. I, for one, would like to thank everyone who does their bit to contribute to the society....The standout for me last Thursday was how friendly and congenial the gardens walk was.....no limit to the exchange of growing tips and plant id's.

Not to rest on our laurels....we have Professor Hazel Chapman speaking about montane plants in Nigeria in April.

The group organising the 65th anniversary has met and is working on ideas – that we hope will make everyone feel inclusive. Dates for your diaries are outlined in this newsletter.

And thank you to everyone who bought or sold the 'Above The Treeline' books – we have now sold out, except for a few books that we will give to speakers or guests of the NZAGS.

A reminder that seeds are now being collected. This is a great source of new plants and for our overseas members a chance to get some of our native seed, that we maybe take for granted.

'Montane' refers to the forest at relatively high altitudes, characterized by cooler temperatures, cloudiness and specific plant communities, often with moss-covered trees and dense undergrowth- Ed.

NZAGS 65th Anniversary Celebrations

Save these dates; Sunday 13th July and 6-8th February 2026.

Your 65th committee are working hard on further details, but would love everyone to join the celebration of all things Alpine Society, so please clear your busy diaries and put these dates down for NZAGS events!

Council Meeting's Update Jenny Ladley Secretary

This year is shaping up to be another busy year for the NZAGS and the committee is hard at work governing the group, organising events and meetings. Under our new constitution we will be setting up sub-committees. This is to lighten the workload of the committee members and make processes easier to maintain when people are away. We will be asking for members to help and contribute to these sub-committees at the next few meetings. Don't be surprised or frightened if Pauline or I tap you on the shoulder and ask you to help.

This is also a gentle reminder that the AGM will be in August and we are in need of a few more committee members. Please consider being part of the committee. It's not a hard job.

We are always looking for interesting and informative speakers for our monthly meetings.

Please let Hamish or Pauline know if you have any suggestions of people we could ask to speak. Or if you'd like to talk about your favourite plant or trip or garden. The talks don't need to be long, we can combine several talks in one evening.

January Meeting Report *by Kate Pearce*

SEARCH OF THE BLUE POPPY FROM CHINA TO TIBET

Our NZAGS member Carol Halstead travelled with 12 others in June-July 2023 on a guided trip by John Mitchell from the Royal Botanic Gardens and members of the UK Alpine Garden Society for 18 days starting at Lijiang in the Yunnan province in China to Lhasa in Tibet. In Carol's words, anywhere above the treeline is a favourite place for her, first travelling by bus and then spending four days in jeeps. They were lucky to see, when the misty days allowed, large fields of *Meconopsis horridula*, lots of anemones and primula's everywhere. "Tiger Leaping Gorge" is a scenic canyon on the Jinsha River, a primary tributary of the Upper Yangtze River, 60km north of Lijiang City, at 3790m. It is home to the Nakhi people, who survive on grain production and hiking tourism.

Roscoea tibetica, *Saussurea wardii* (common name 'cotton-headed snow lotus') and many *Cremanthodium* species were sighted along with *Silene gonosperma* and *Fritillaria delavayi* that grow in the subalpine or subarctic biome and are used in Chinese medicine. The largest Tibetan monastery is the Songzan Monastery that is still functioning to this day. It was built in 1679 and hosts around 700 monks. A unique feature Carol saw were glasshouses that were built to enclose the houses for additional insulation. In the Bai Ma Shan region, rhododendrons were growing everywhere. Other regions showed off *Pedicularis elwesii*, *Paraquelegia microphylla*, *Fritillaria cirrhosa*, *Chionocharis hookeri*, *Delphinium brunonianum*, *Salvia wardii* and *Corydalis melanochlora*. Great excitement was caused by the discovery of *Gentiana urnula*, an urn-shaped gentian happily growing in gravel slopes. The giant herbaceous *Rheum nobile* or noble rhubarb was a sight to behold at over two metres in height and is highly prized in the medical world as a tonic for the digestive system in small doses. Being in this region of the globe, it was only natural that *Ailanthus altissima* "Tree of Heaven" were a common sight ! Other delights of the trip was partaking in Tea Cakes and Red Mountain tea, consisting of lichen and moss. Carol and the other members of the tour were amazed at the vast variety of fruits available at roadside stalls. Tibetan pilgrims had to go one better and have a solar panel on the front of their carts so they could listen to their radio !!

Thank you so much Carol for a wonderful talk and taking us to this unique part of the world.



Chionocharis hookeri



Meconopsis horridula



Rheum nobile



Gentiana urnula



Corydalis melanochlora

Photos supplied kindly by Carol. Thanks

March Speaker Report *by Jenny Ladley*

Members started arriving at the Kiosk in the Christchurch Botanical Gardens soon after 5pm on the 6th of March. The weather was perfect for our visit to the Alpine and Crevice garden areas. We were all keen to have a look around the gardens. Promptly (well not really, but just about) at 6.15pm we headed off to the Alpine garden, with Grant leading us like the pied piper. There were approximately fifty members on the tour and he did well not to lose any of us along the way. Once at the Crevice garden Grant talked about its creation and development over the past four years. He said constructing the ridgeline to be 'east to west' has allowed for the creation of a hot, sunny side (facing north) and a shaded, cooler growing zone (on the south facing side).



One success has been the smaller cushion Dianthus plants that have thrived on the dry sunny side. Grant also mentioned that he's ruthless at removing any plants that become too big as they will possibly smother smaller plantings.

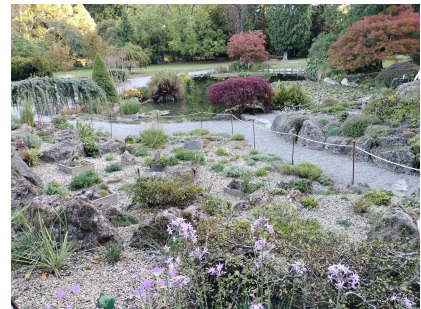
We then had a chance to have a look around the rockery garden areas before heading back to the kiosk for a lovely supper (well done to the supper team) and lots more conversation.

Congratulations to Grant and his crew, including the four NZAGS volunteers who help out weekly with the weeding and plantings. The gardens are a credit to Grant's team's hard work and enthusiasm.

Thanks to Grant Matheson for organising the tour and use of the Kiosk. We will definitely be aiming to head back to the Alpine garden area of the Christchurch Botanical Gardens.



Thanks Dennis Chang for taking these lovely photos.



A wider view of the rockery

NB. The volunteers usually meet on a Monday morning at 9.30am (summer) and 1pm (winter) for a couple of hours of weeding and planting in the crevice garden and rockery areas. If you would like to join us I am sure you would be made welcome. ED

Changed your address recently?

Please let Tina know so your Bulletin will be sent to the correct address.

tina@nzags.com

Joy's Journal Joy Stack

My love affair with dogwoods is truly over. I only have fourteen of them counting the two evergreens! Their root systems are terrible-surface matted fibrous roots that devour everything in their path and suck any moisture out of the soil. I recently lost a precious collection of *Galanthus*, just because I thought they'd look nice under *Cornus kousa* 'National'. They were consumed by the greedy roots. Now in the same garden, I'm trying to retrieve *Erythroniums* for potting up. They are about two spades deep, but fortunately are way under the *Cornus* roots. It's a mission to get through the matted root system to find the bulbs. The birds have had a field day with the labels, so I'm not sure which variety is which and won't know until they flower.

I have just planted two lovely plants of the double-blue *Hepatica*. They deserve the best so without disturbing them too much, I have planted them in a mixture of my own compost- leaf mould, a small amount of old horse manure, tea leaves and coarse pumice. Even though they are woodland plants, their new position gets virtually no sun, just a tiny bit early in the morning. Their friends in this position are flourishing, unlike the ones under a dogwood which have shade but little moisture, and it's a full time job keeping the water up to them.



Photo Ashwood Nurseries UK



N. viridiflorus Photo WWW

My bulbs of the green *Narcissus* - *N. viridiflorus* are looking good, having been exhumed from their very dry potting mix where they have been all summer. Now I would like to know when to start watering them. It must be soon as autumn seems to be here.

When my *Paeonia cambessedesii* was in full bloom, I hand-pollinated it and, to my surprise on harvesting the seeds and counting them, I found there were 300! Some will be going to the seed exchange. Hand pollination is the way to go.

Talking of seeds, I carefully gathered the tiny seed pods off my lovely deep pink *Carmichaelia stevensonii*, kindly given to me by David Hobbs. Unfortunately they are very hard and dry and difficult to "pod". I'm not sure if the pods are going to open of their own accord eventually or the whole thing has to be planted as is, which would be a lot easier. They might be sent to the seed exchange if I can get the seeds out!

January meeting Show Bench Results

30 January 2025 Judge: Dolina Barker	
OPEN EXOTIC Container Grown- UNDER 15CM	
1. <i>Leontopodium alpinum mignon</i>	Hamish & Mika Brown
2. <i>Calceolaria sp</i>	Hamish & Mika Brown
3. <i>Cyclamen purpurea</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
OPEN -EXOTIC-Container Grown OVER 15CM	
1. <i>Gaultheria mucronata</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
2. <i>Edrianthus sp</i>	Hamish & Mika Brown
3. <i>Frithia pulchra</i>	Gabor Csontos
OPEN- NATIVE Container Grown	
OPEN -CUT BLOOM	
1. <i>Ismene festalis</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
2. <i>Gentiana paradoxa</i>	Chris Garland
3. <i>Echeveria agavoides longissima</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
OPEN - CUT BLOOM 3 of 3	
Sue Petersen	
Sue Petersen	
NOVICE - EXOTIC Container Grown under 15cm	
1. <i>Arenaria ledebouriana</i>	Jenny Ladley
2. <i>Orchid 'Mrs Newton Falls'</i>	Jenny Ladley
3. <i>Fuschia sp magellanica(?)</i>	Jenny Ladley
NOVICE - EXOTIC Container grown over 15cm	
1. <i>Fuschia Terry Hatch</i>	Pauline Murphy
NOVICE - CUT BLOOM	
<i>Eucomis sp.</i>	Alison McCormack
<i>Thalictrum 'Hewitt's Double'</i>	Alison McCormack
PREMIER PLANT	
<i>Leontopodium alpina mignon</i>	Hamish & Mika Brown
PREMIER BULB	
<i>Eucomis</i>	Alison McCormack



Leontopodium alpinum mignon, commonly known as Edelweiss. Hardy- growing to 15cm approx. Loves sun or partshade in a rockery



Gaultheria mucronata- native to Argentina and Chile. Bears bright red or white berries



Arenaria ledebouriana-prickly leaves and delicate white flowers. From Turkey and Iran sun or shade and rocky environment.

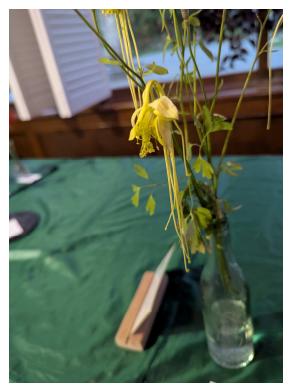
A clean pot is great for helping your plant look fantastic. Moss and lichen are ok on a terracotta pot.

March meeting Show Bench Results

6 March 2025 Judge: Adrian Bliss	
OPEN EXOTIC Container Grown- UNDER 15CM	
1. <i>Adenium obesum</i>	Gabor Csontos
OPEN -EXOTIC-Container Grown OVER 15CM	
1. <i>Haemanthus albiflos</i>	Gabor Csontos
OPEN- NATIVE Container Grown	
OPEN -CUT BLOOM	
1. <i>Gentiana acaulis</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
2. <i>Tibouchina urvilleana</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
3. <i>Nerine sarniensis cultivar</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
OPEN - CUT BLOOM 3 of 3	
1st. Lynne Reyn	
2nd. Lynne Reyn	
NOVICE - EXOTIC Container Grown under 15cm	
1. <i>Geranium traversii</i>	Jane Griffen
2. <i>Potentilla fragiformus</i>	Jane Griffen
NOVICE - EXOTIC Container grown over 15cm	
NOVICE - CUT BLOOM	
1. <i>Aquilegia longissima</i>	Jenny Ladley
NOVICE CUT BLOOMS 3 OF 3	
1. Sue Petersen	
PREMIER PLANT	
<i>Adenium obesum</i>	Gabor Csontos
PREMIER BULB	
<i>Nerine sarniensis cultivar</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman



Rear left: *Haemanthus albiflos*



Aquilegia longissima

Thank you Dennis Chang for your photos.

Selecting a container to exhibit your cut flower

For a tall flower choose a tall thin container
 For a shorter stem choose a smaller container
 For a wider bloom choose a sturdy wider container
 You can use moss to steady your exhibit.

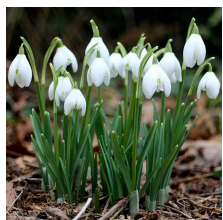
Clean bottles from the kitchen are fine. There are always plenty of 'bullets' available at meetings and shows. There are a couple of different sizes.

My Favourite Plants *Nancy Ridder*

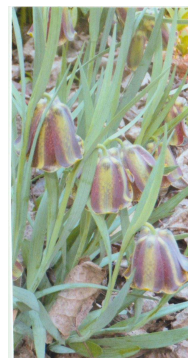
Nancy is well known at NZAGS meetings and shows. She has regularly shown alpines and has sold thousands of well-grown plants at shows along with her good friend Joy Stack. Nancy has a large garden just south of Tinwald (Ashburton)

Trying to choose my favourite 6 alpine plants is not easy.

Fritillaria pyrenaica, which has been growing in my family's gardens since before 1948, would be my favourite. These bulbs have never set seed but multiply readily. It is not fussy where it grows in my garden but does best if the bulbs have a ground-cover and doesn't get too wet. Joan Whillans introduced me to many more fritillaria and how to grow them from seed from seed exchanges.



Galanthus nivalis, both the single and the double, are another plant from Grandma's garden. These do well under trees and I enjoy seeing the white flowers lighting up the garden. Now with the introductions from overseas by Prue Harper, a whole new world of galanthus has arrived.



Daphne 'Miss Katie'. A small daphne bred by the late Merv Holland. One parent being *Daphne petraea*, the other is unknown. It is slow to grow and has small pink flowers on a compact plant. This daphne gets some shade from the summer heat.

Cyclamen mirabile that I brought from Jenny Riach. The reverse of the leaves are a deep red and the flowers pale pink. The leaves are very pretty and makes a show by themselves. I grow it in a sunny, drier garden.



Photo 'The Cyclamen Society'

Gentiana acaulis. This was given to me while living in Southland by the late Betty Paterson, a grower of alpines, about 45 years ago. When it didn't flower the next year she advised me to go home and stand on it as it wasn't planted firmly enough. I followed her advice and it has flowered that beautiful deep blue ever since. Last spring it had nearly 50 flowers out at once.



Crocus biflorus ssp alexandrii. This was grown from one of the seed exchanges chosen because our son is Alexander. I enjoy watching this open up as it has very pale lavender inside petals with the outside petals being a dark purple. This grows near trees in a sunny spot and flowers mid-August.

The next newsletter will be sent out by email on 20th May. Please have any contributions to Judith by the 10th May. Thanks. Any notices will be approved by the Council prior to publication.

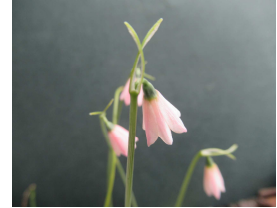
My Favourite Plants

Edna Parkyn

My love and interest in plants began as a child. I have always been an avid gardener. Fascination of the plant life cycle and the anatomy of plants was extended even more-so when I began employment as propagator-plus at a well known local plant nursery. Then on retirement I opened a small business specializing in aroids. My customer list grew to include plants people from all over NZ and overseas. These folk were all good growers, keen to exchange fresh seed. As my passion had always been to grow from seed the results have been my raising of some very unusual & rare plants. At 78 [7 years ago] I attended Lincoln University as a student to complete my Diploma in Horticulture. I have been a keen member of NZAGS for many years. Not sure how long but my older children were little then. They are now in their 60's. We were having meetings at MED building in Armagh St. in the city. In the past I was a committee member for two years .

Acis Roseum. Close to my back door I have a trough I have kept exclusively for Acis. Amongst an assortment of this species I have a considerable clump of Acis Roseum.

Although it is autumn-flowering, it also sends blooms up at intermittent times of the year. Wonderful to step out the door and to be greeted by these dainty pink surprises. Exquisite pink bells on delicate stems. An absolute treasure.



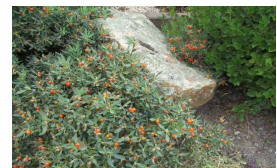
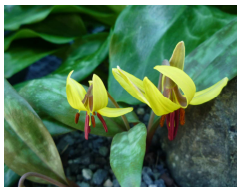
Cyclamen repandum ssp. peloponasiacum. The ornamental leaves splashed and sprinkled in silver and the elegant pink flowers with their deep carmine-pink noses of this bulb, have charmed the show judge several times at NZAGS Spring Shows. It has been with me many years, obtained from the Cyclamen Soc. seed list in the 1990s after an expedition to the Greek Islands to study the species.

Daphne oleoides This compact little plant is a grey-green shrublet about 1 to 2ft in height. It covers itself in creamy white perfumed blossom during Oct/Nov. followed by a profusion of orange berries which I pick each year before Christmas. I have six plants growing very happily in an open sunny position in my front garden. Much admired by passers-by.



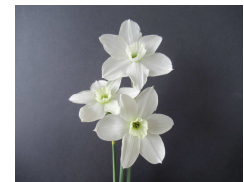
Spring

Erythronium umbilicatum This is a delightful miniature woodland plant given to me many years ago by well-known plant's-person, Alister Blee. It lives in one of my shaded troughs which supply the correct conditions. Early Spring the small ornamental ground hugging leaves, which are heavily covered with chocolate blotching, push their way to the surface. The downward facing flower buds follow and open to reveal bright yellow blooms with their chocolate backing. The stamens become very heavy with dark pollen but unfortunately the seed heads that do develop never quite fully mature. Making it even more precious is its reluctance to increase its tiny tubers. Even so I am very fond of this little gem and wait every year for its emergence.



Summer

Narcissus 'Dainty Miss'. One of my most treasured narcissus. I love the utter perfection of its glistening white petals and its white - green trumpet. A jonquilla type from division 7. Lovely in my garden in Spring, each stem holding several fragrant flowers.



Scilla Lingulata. Attractive leaves emerge and open up to let little racemes of blue push through.

Combined they make a delightful picture. I love all Scilla and blue flowers, and this produces the prettiest. Grows easily and increases well in its ceramic pot placed in a little shade. I have a small pot of a white form which has not flowered as yet. So looking forward to this - there is always something to look forward to in my garden.

All photos are provided by Edna. Thanks



Edna found it hard to stick to six plants so she sent me another two. I will pop them into a later newsletter. ED

General Notices

Seed Exchange

Now is the time to think about collecting seed from your favourite plants both in your garden or from the wild.

A good hint is to have some little gauze bags (from \$2 shops) and cover the seedpod so you won't lose any precious seed and they will wait for you to come and collect each and every little seed.

A few minutes both accurately identifying the seed and taking out any debris will be most appreciated by the Seed Distributors. Store in a paper envelope or small paper bag. Plastic bags create static and make getting the seed out of the bag problematic.

When you are ready post all packets in one envelope to the:

Seed Director

PO Box 2984

Christchurch 8140

Or you can bring seed to a meeting in April. Ensure the envelope is clearly marked with your name,

New Members

Welcome to our new members:

Glenis Evert - Rangiora
Helen Nelson - Wellington
Katie Vaassen - Sandspit
(Auckland Region)
Kailey Caldwell-Waluk - Canada

Plants Wanted

- *Lachenalia orchoides var. glaucina* bulbs to buy or swap
Email: eljames@xtra.co.nz
Evelyn tells me she would like the purple one originally from Bill Dijk but it is unavailable now.
- *Sollya heterophylla* to buy
Email: jude.stephens@gmail.com
I got this from Parva Plants, lost it and PP can't supply it anymore
- *Corydalis malkensis*- Lesley Cox had it but it has passed. And I would love it. Email: jude.stephens@gmail.com
- *Campanula isophylla* doubles in blue or white
Cuttings would be fine.
Email: suzanne@nzags.com

Committee and Support Team 2024-25

NZAGS email addresses:

Pauline Murphy - pauline@nzags.com
Suzanne Pickford - suzanne@nzags.com
Hamish Brown - hamish@nzags.com
Robert Duns - robert@nzags.com
Ai-Ling Chang - ai-ling@nzags.com
Jenny Ladley - jenny@nzags.com
Tina Bunce - tina@nzags.com
Gabor Csontos - gabor@nzags.com
Rob Lines - rob@nzags.com

Additional contact addresses:

info@nzags.com
showsecretary@nzags.com Tina
secretary@nzags.com Jenny
president@nzags.com Pauline
editor@nzags.com - Bulletin-Suzanne
seeddirector@nzags.com Hilary
treasurer@nzags.com Robert
showconvenor@nzags.com- Robert
judith@nzags.com - Newsletter