



NEW ZEALAND ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY Inc 1960 - 2025

Newsletter

June July August 2025

Calendar of Events

13th July - 65th Anniversary event

August - Snowdrop Day
Ashburton Prue Harper

31st October - 2 November
Trillium Weekend-Millers Flat
More info
d4rowans@outlook.com

6th-7th February 2026
65th Anniversary event

NZ Alpine Garden Society Inc.

PO Box 2984

Christchurch 8140

Email: info@nzags.com

Website: <https://www.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 5th 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 Lorraine Thompson

12.30pm 13th July

65th Anniversary Celebratory Lunch -buffet lunch

Family member, past and present members very welcome. More information on P 3.

8pm 7th August

Annual General Meeting

Paul Maurice- Kazakhstan and the Altai Mountains

Supper- Judith Stephens Wendy Wallace

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.

If you can't make it to the venue you can join the Zoom Meeting opens at 7:30pm

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87408735664?pwd=xpFBJbvfmlTboglkX7nsaSnxRj3txR.1>

Meeting ID: 874 0873 5664
Passcode: 105365

Endemic Plants of Rakiura/Stewart Island

Melissa Hutchinson, has over 20 years of experience as an ecologist, having worked for DOC, Landcare Research, Massey University, University of Canterbury and now is a consultant ecologist based in Christchurch. Her interests are Dryland ecosystems, threatened plants, lichens and weeds.

UPCOMING MEETING SPEAKERS

September 4th - Suzanne Pickford and her recent trip to Europe

October 2nd - Pieter and Julie talking about Rafflesia

November TBC -The Steve Newell Speaking Tour: Clint Callans

Unfortunately, our May meeting had to be cancelled due to weather – and as I write this, sitting in sunshine after our first heavy frost, I am reflecting on what climate change means to us....

In Christchurch last week we had heavy rain – 180mm at my work at Lincoln and for our members in Little River 300mm!! A State of Emergency was declared here and in Wellington, where high winds were declared as 'life threatening'.

I was reflecting on what impact climate changes must be having on our 'alpine treasures' and (as I recalled) some of the content from two of our prominent speakers from last year – Emeritus Professor Sir Alan Marks mentioned that the majority of NZ plants are monoecious and therefore hybridisers, which could mean that they can flourish / grow in a greater (changing) range of environmental factors - here's hoping.

And Emeritus Professor Dave Kelly mentioning that mast flowering (of which 90% of NZ plants are) triggers, were influenced by the differential in the previous and current seasons temperatures.....so will hotter and colder seasons trigger more mast flowering?

Some food for thought as we enter the 65th year of the NZ Alpine Garden Society –

Congratulations to us!

Please join us - past and present members, family members and alpine enthusiasts for lunch on the 13th July. Details are below.

Your council, despite cancelled meetings has been working hard – with several events on the busy NZAGS agenda coming up. An exciting list of event dates are included in this newsletter – please pop them into your diaries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your prompt payment of the 2025 subscriptions.

Join us on 5th June to welcome Melissa Hutchinson enlightening us on plants from Stewart Island / Rakiura – somewhere that I have experienced 4 seasons in one day!

**The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Alpine Garden Society Inc.
will be held at the Philatelic Centre 67 Mandeville Street Riccarton
Christchurch
at 8pm on the 7th of August 2025**

We are always looking for new people to join us on the committee. If you are interested in this then please talk to Pauline (pauline@nzags.com) or Jenny (jenny@nzags.com). We will be able to run through the function of the committee and what we do to run the society. It's not a hard job and if we had a few more people on the committee it would make it even easier for us to organise all the great events that we do in the society: the monthly meetings; Spring show; bulletin; seed swap; garden visits; the library; and Christmas function to name just a few.

Please consider contributing to your society by joining the Council....many hands make light work!

NZAGS 65th Anniversary Celebrations

The society is marking its 65th anniversary with a lunch celebration.

13th July 2025

Philatelic Centre, 67 Mandeville St., Riccarton, Christchurch.

Doors open at 12.30pm. Lunch will be served from 1pm.

\$25 per person for a buffet lunch

Complimentary drink on arrival. BYO other drinks.

Last day for payment is **3rd of July**

Please join us as we mark this milestone in the New Zealand Alpine Society's history.

We welcome current and past members and their families. Please share this invitation.

Payment can be made as an online bank payment or pay in person (cash only) at the next evening meeting on the 5th of June.

Paying is your registration - \$25 per person.

Many thanks to the committee for their generous subsidy towards the cost of the lunch.

The bank account information for paying online

BNZ account holder: NZAGS

Account number: **02 0800 0177365 000**

Please use for **Reference: 'Lunch' and Particulars: Your name (first initial and surname).**

Please note which account you are paying into and ensure you are using the above account number.

The members of the Council and 65th Committee look forward to seeing you all there.

We will send out a reminder email closer to the date as well.

**** We would love to display some of your photos from the last 65 years. ****

Please send copies of these to pauline@nzags.com OR bring them to June meeting and we will scan these and return the original back to you.

New Zealand Alpine Garden Society 2025

Nomination form for Committee member

Name.....

Nominee's signature.....

Proposed by.....

Seconded by.....

Email* nomination to secretary@nzags.com by 16th July 2025

*Or post nomination form to PO Box 2984 Christchurch 8140.

April Meeting Report *by Kate Pearce*

AFROMONTANE AND NIGERIAN MONTANE FOREST PROJECT

Hazel Chapman has been working in Nigeria for the past 20 plus years following in her father's forest botanist footsteps. The project has combined scientific research with education at tertiary and local community levels to conserve a rare Nigerian Afromontane Forest Reserve. This biodiversity-conservation project is led by UC Associate Professor Hazel and is partly funded by philanthropic donations from Chester Zoo in England and the A G Leventis Foundation.

Established in 2004, the project inspires excellence in research by training post graduate and undergraduate students, while empowering local communities through employment and education.

With 36 full-time local staff, the research station is situated at 1600 metre elevation on the very edge of Ngel Nyaki Forest, an ancient volcano.

The forest has a unique diversity with high endemics, where the trees are large and slow-growing, storing more carbon units per acre than the Amazon forest.

The discovery of a new species of *Metrungia pubinervia* (Red Sunbird Bush) in 2002 was sent to Kew Gardens, suggesting that maybe the African landscape used to be a lot colder and had more forested areas. Nigeria has a population of 250 million and has a growth rate of 3% per year.

The forests of Taraba and Adamawa State records, containing an ecological account and plant species has been updated by Hazel at Kew Gardens and is a great resource for this part of the world.

The Mambilla Plateau in the 1970's was a very remote area, so the Gashaka-Gumti National Park was created in 1980. The changes to the area over the past 30 years has seen the forest relatively unchanged, but the loss of seeds and pollinators, also a dramatic reduction of wildlife, especially large-bodied vertebrates, has sadly occurred. The Fulani people are semi-nomadic pastoralists who have small hamlets with many cattle that have been problematic with their grazing.

Our NZAGS member, Matt Walters, joined Hazel in 2002 on a 50-day expedition and provided his excellent photographic skills to the trek, capturing the very weedy international herbs on the 'Mountain of Death'!

Many thanks to Hazel for her lifetime of dedication to this unique part of the world and also to Matt for his dedication and support too.



Flower of the Red Sunbird Bush Photo

More links to our other services.

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Link to website :: [Newsletter](https://www.nzags.com/newsletter): <https://www.nzags.com/newsletter>

Link to website - [programme](https://www.nzags.com/programme) - <https://www.nzags.com/programme>

Damn! -I should have read the instructions before dividing *Calanthe arisanensis* (cold climate ground orchid), white with a touch of pink. 'Divide after flowering in spring it said' - not this week, (late autumn). Oh dear, now I have potted up divisions with leaves chopped and long roots shortened!

I see too that the rhizomes are a chain of round pseudobulbs with roots attached but no greenery on top. After spending time breaking these off and planting, thinking how easy it was, I now read that they rarely send up shoots and just remain dormant!

Next job - exhume said knobs and dispose of. What a waste of time.

Not sure if potted leafy pieces will now survive the winter in the cool shadehouse with leaves and roots chopped, even though they were soaked in fungicide and dusted with flowers of sulphur. In the garden I cover them with frost cloth for the winter and I know they grow well as far south as Invercargill I am reluctant now to attack the other colours in the group. I will have to watch the situation carefully.

Lovely day today, ideal for tidying the Trilliums and things in the shadehouse. Looks good, mostly bare soil. Time to scatter a thin layer of sheep pellets while I can see what I'm doing. Then, I hear the lawnmower man arrive. He hasn't been for a month because of the rain. Wow, a thick coating of leaves combined with the grass clippings into the hastily gathered bins. So yummy, I could eat it, and straight onto the layer of sheep pellets, making a nice sandwich when I get to spread the coffee grounds I have accumulated, and it will all be put to bed for the winter. All in all a satisfying good day.

I have a dislike of our native *Pratia puberula* "Blue Stars" or "White Stars". Yes, very pretty in a big patch, but get it in your lawn and it's difficult to remove. From there it gallops back into your garden and makes more work for you. I have tried most lawn sprays without much success. It's very tenacious. I see that hydrocotyl killer is now recommended for it. I see it for sale in the shops at a very expensive price - unbelievable as it's so easy to propagate and very fast growing.

I don't seem to have lost anything in the torrential rain, but have gained a very healthy coating of moss and liverwort in my pots!



Calanthe arisanensis 'spider'



Potted divisions



Calanthe arisanensis
flowers

Changed your address recently?
Please let Tina know so your Bulletin will be sent to the correct address.
Please email tina@nzags.com

April meeting Show Bench Results

3 April 2025 Judge: Sue Petersen	
OPEN EXOTIC Container Grown- UNDER 15CM	
1. <i>Androsace barbulata</i>	Joy Stack
OPEN -EXOTIC-Container Grown OVER 15CM	
1. <i>Seemannia nematanthodes</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
OPEN- NATIVE Container Grown	
No entries	
OPEN -CUT BLOOM	
1. <i>Dichroa versicolor</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
2. <i>Onigozanthus</i> 'Royal Cheer'	Ann & Joe Cartman
3. <i>Schizostylis coccinea</i> 'Sunrise'	Wendy Wallace
OPEN - CUT BLOOM 3 of 3	
No entries	
NOVICE - EXOTIC Container Grown under 15cm	
1. <i>Ledebouria socialis</i>	Jenny Ladley
2. African violet	Maureen Day
NOVICE - NATIVE Container grown	
1. <i>Veronica buchananii</i>	Jenny Ladley
NOVICE - CUT BLOOM	
No entries	
NOVICE CUT BLOOMS 3 OF 3	
1. Jenny Ladley	
2. Jenny Ladley	
3. Pauline Murphy	
PREMIER PLANT	
<i>Seemannia nematanthodes</i>	Ann & Joe Cartman
PREMIER BULB	
<i>Ledebouria socialis</i>	Jenny Ladley
<p>Presentation is key. Do clean your pots and take out any dead leaves or bugs. Dennis is practicing his photography for the Show at our meetings. We acknowledge it is a time to bring your plants along and share with us, but equally it is a time to learn how to present them.</p>	

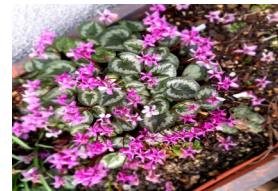


My Six Favourite Plants Lesley Cox

I had a nursery in Timaru, called Highfield Alpines because I lived in the Highfield area, then moved to Dunedin then to Clarendon near Milton and changed the nursery name to Gala Plants in memory of my grandma's home in Galashiels (Scotland) but also Galanthus etc. No nursery now but still propagate a bit - some seeds, cuttings etc. I started growing alpines when I was 13.

Cyclamen coum

It is so reliable, so generous and so beautiful. I've always thought of Cyclamen coum as the winter-flowering one but in recent years while starting in late winter it has produced its greatest show through the whole of spring. From late summer if the weather is damp like most of this summer, the leaves put on their own lovely show: some glossy dark green. Then there are many plants whose leaves are entirely pewter coloured or with a pencil-thin edge of deep green.



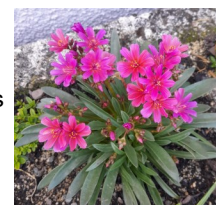
Narcissus 'Susan Cox'

Named for my daughter, this is a perfect little trumpet daffodil of about 11-12 cms in height from a small batch of seed from my own garden of 'Gambas' crossed with cyclamineus. It is easy to grow, flowering from early August, and increasing well. It has the swept back petals of all hybrids with cyclamineus and a tube-shaped corolla with a minutely frilled edge. It is bright gold throughout and loved by all who see it.



Lewisia

I mention lewisia in general for this group of "6 Must Haves" because over the recent spring and summer, they had all been particularly good. Many of mine have flowered non-stop, making new buds even before the prior batch of stems are wilting off. Most have set seed and happily, most which do, come true from seed. Outstanding has been the pure white large-flowered seedling which came from Hokonui. Others like the coloured 'Sunset Strain' forms, the "Little" series (I can't remember their original parent, maybe longipetala?) such as 'Little Plum,' 'Little Peach' and 'Little 'Tutti Frutti' have seeded all over the trough. I have them in and among the gravel at the troughs' bases. *Lewisia tweedyi* has also flowered well along with its 'rosea' form and both have made some seed so all good there. Lewisia are usually thought of as needing near drought conditions but I've learned not to agree with this. It seems to me they like lots of water PROVIDED it drains well and after all we've had the most wet and miserable spring/summer here in Canterbury for many years, including endless grey and sunless days.



Gentiana verna

It's difficult to choose a single gentian for a "must have" list but a good blue is essential in such a list. So Gentiana is the "fish of the day," so to speak. I bought a quite good plant from a tiny nursery in Timaru during a South Canterbury Iris Group visit in 2023. It was planted in a trough and regularly watered through the succeeding summer and autumn, made buds in the spring of last year. As the blue buds opened I noticed some were just about white showing that, in fact, my blue seedling was two, the second being not purest white but white with just a suggestion of the old blue bag our mothers used to whiten sheets and other linen. As they opened they were larger than the blue flowers and were very beautiful, quite different from the white forms I'd had years before.



Photo from Alamy

Dianthus erinaceus

This may be renamed as *D. webbianus*. I haven't seen an authority for this so will go on with *erinaceus* since the word is so painfully appropriate.

In 1967 I received seed and some plants from the Turkish Expedition to Turkey, of Sidney Albury, Martyn Cheese and John Watson, collectively known to their shareholders as AC and W. Among the seeds was *Dianthus erinaceus* which germinated nicely, and in due course, was planted in an old concrete double washtub. It lived there for twenty-two years until I moved to Dunedin when I (painfully) dug it out and took it by wheelbarrow down the front path and steps to my small car parked on the street and manoeuvred it onto a sack on the front seat.

I soon learned that "erinaceus" pertained to the common or garden hedgehog and my late husband came to call it "that prick of a plant" after he accidentally brushed it with his hand one day. I never minded the pricks because it is such a good and reliable plant. It is incredibly tough. Harvesting its

copious seed is the only task I undertake knowing full well it will be very painful from beginning to end. Planted now in a trough which only gets late afternoon sun, it has set no seed this first year as a renewed plant so I'll have to take some cuttings. I've done so previously and they root reasonably

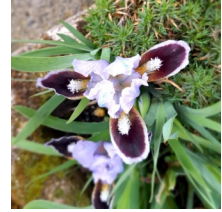
easily, but again, must be handled very carefully.



Iris 'Mary B'

So many irises are appropriate for a rock garden but the large group of Miniature Dwarf Bearded irises are all perfectly sized and come in many colours and combinations of colours. They flower from August for a couple of months and love an open sunny place with lime and good drainage. They are great plants too for large pots and troughs, witness the super specimens grown by Mika Brown who is now to be known as 'Mrs Iris'. The Iris in the photo is 'Mary B.'

All photos, except the gentian, are Lesley's own.



My Six Favourite Plants

Tina Bunce

Tina is our Show Secretary and Membership Secretary.

Choosing favourite plants is a hard thing to do because as gardeners we love everything we grow. Here are a few favourites growing in my garden.

Galanthus

Such a joy to see pop up in late autumn to early spring. So special to see them flowering away amongst fallen leaves on a cold winter day. Galanthus gives me the gift of conjuring up in my mind of all the other types of beautiful bulbs that are to come in Spring. Pictured is Yvonne Hay, one I especially love. It is so elegant and a simple fresh clean white.



Tecophilaea cyanocrocus

Is a wonderful shade of blue. I enjoy blue flowers and I have grown a couple from seed so that is a bonus for me.



Albuca shawii

Is a nice plant that grows very easily and gets plenty of seeds. I grow mine in a pot and when you are not looking all of a sudden there is a wonderful clump of yellow flowers. They flower for quite a while too.



Leontopodium nivale

The Edelweiss I have had growing in a plastic pot for many years. I transferred it to my small rock garden and it fits in well. I am wanting to find all types to grow, this one has a longer stem which is good for picking and they last well in a vase. It dries well as a whole flower also. I am planning to find more edelweiss and fill a very large trough with them and blue gentians also. It will remind me of when I saw them growing naturally in the Dolomites.



Clematis rooguchi

Is a fabulous clematis that ticks away happily in my garden. It doesn't climb naturally but scrambles. I have trained it to grow upright against a wall on an old metal gate and it seems to stay there now. It flowers for a long time and the beautiful colour doesn't fade as the petals are so thick. The black stems are a feature of this clematis that I like very much.



Meconopsis lingholm

The last beautiful blue poppy that I had growing in my garden 2 years ago. The Meconopsis is a plant I have loved for years and grown for years and have repeatedly lost for years! Yet I still spend money on buying another plant and still fail in keeping it growing. I have managed to grow from seed, but not completely to the flowering stage. I buy an established plant and can only keep it for a year or two if I am lucky. I have tried all varieties of the blue poppy. I will keep



trying as the meconopsis has always been my first love of plants and I have a special place in my heart for Tibet. I won't give up trying to grow my dream plant. I will master it one day, I am sure!

All photos are Tina's own, except the clematis.

General Notices

- Don't forget to keep potting up those special little plants for the Spring Show Sales Table in September.
- Take a minute to thoroughly clean your used pots to recycle with your cuttings, slips or whatever. I go through mine periodically and toss out the ones made of a lighter plastic or have cracks in them but reusing pots is a great way to 'save the planet'. If you have too many, share them among other members.
- Labels too, can be reused, as long as they are not brittle. I find the cheaper ones from the large stores don't last more than a year (or two at the most). There is nothing worse than looking into a pot and seeing a label in three or four pieces! I think it's better to invest in better ones. Ask around- someone may be interested in sharing the cost of getting good labels from Egmont Seeds, as an example. The more you order the cheaper they become. \$2 for 10 \$7.50 for 50

New Members

Welcome to our new members:

Ann Clay - Christchurch

Janice Price - Katikati

Kerry Whitford - Balfour

Lynda Peat - Ohakuri

Sandy Walker - Te Puna

Stephen McKillop - Lincoln

Tania Coochey - Levels

Eric Martin - France

For membership/subscription enquiries Tina is the first point of contact. Her email is below.

Plants Wanted

Not a request for plants but for a special person who would be willing to start a section in the newsletter about what to do when. Potting up, dividing, fertilising, pruning, etc etc.

I am sure our members would enjoy any information that would help with growing some of our more temperamental and hard to grow plants.

If you think you could do this please get in touch with me.

judith@nzags.com

NB. I have just talked to a very experienced gardener and he says late autumn is a great time to add lime to the base of clematis, saxifraga and other alkaline-loving plants.

Committee and Support Team 2024-25

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judith@nzags.com - Newsletter Judith Stephens

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