

Jack Hobbs' Garden Diary

It is now widely accepted that the best time to plant trees and shrubs is autumn and early winter. Soils are still relatively warm, and they usually remain moist for several months allowing plenty of time for plants to establish. Come springtime they can be confidently expected to 'spring' into growth, and they are well prepared to withstand a dry summer.



One of the main roles of the Botanic Gardens is to recommend the best plants for growing in Auckland conditions. More than 100 advisory leaflets are now available from our Visitor Centre, either individually or as a full set and these are all available online.



The best way to make use of the advisory leaflets is for guidance when planting. For example, if you are into roses but do not want to regularly spray them, a quick look through our Rose Advisory Leaflet will tell you which roses from our trials have remained healthy and free-flowering without spraying or any fussy treatment.

If native plants are more your thing we have a complete section covering most well known groups of native plants such as Hebe, Pittosporum and Coprosma. Also available are leaflets on topics like hedging and how to attract birds into the garden.

If looking for a few stalwart plants that can be guaranteed to perform try the following:

Hebe 'Wiri Mist' is a hybrid raised at the Botanic

Gardens that I still regard as the best to emanate from our breeding programme. Masses of white flowers appear late each spring, the fleshy green foliage always looks clean, and there is even no need to prune after flowering. Best in a sunny spot with free draining soil.

'Wiri Splash', is another great Hebe, with lavender flowers that peak in November.

Of the many pohutukawa selections we have grown at the Gardens, the finest is *Metrosideros excelsa* 'Vibrance'. As Christmas approaches brilliant scarlet blooms smother the branch tips. This slender upright tree is smaller than most and can be accommodated in most gardens. Avoid planting near established wild populations of pohutukawa though.



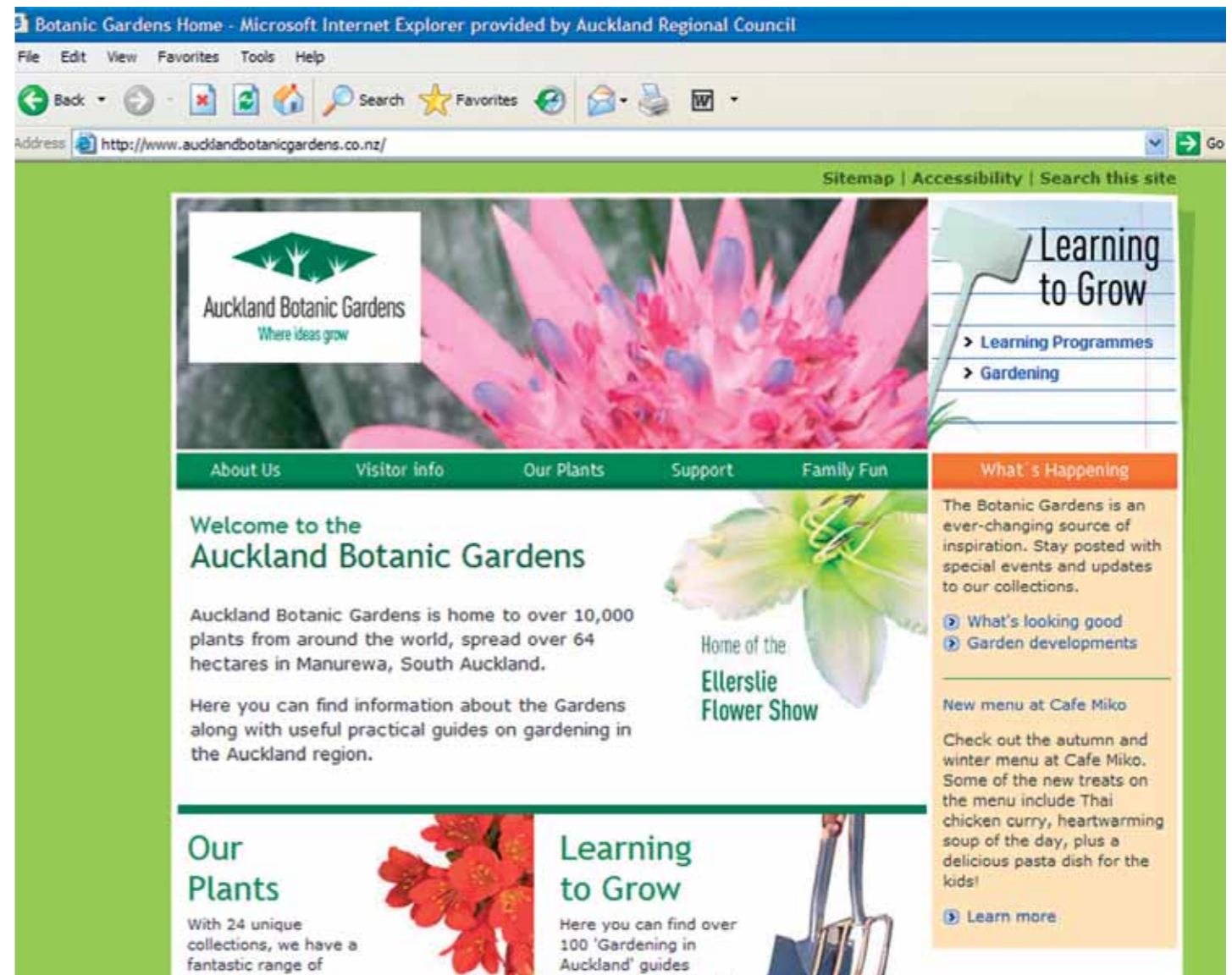
Finally, a rose that that has outperformed all others in our rose trials. 'Flower Carpet Red' is a low growing rose that smothers itself with blooms for months on end. I was amazed to see our plants looking healthy and flowering during the hottest part of our recent long dry summer. If you only have room for one rose, this could be the one!

www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz

More interactive, more informative and more beautiful photographs! The Auckland Botanic Gardens has just launched a fantastic new website that is jam-packed with gardening advice, events, volunteer opportunities and a fair bit of background on one of the region's favourite parks.

More than 100 advisory leaflets, on a wide variety of topics from composting and allergies, to hibiscus, hydrangeas and magnolias can be read or downloaded. Sneak a peek at Café Miko's latest menu and check out the range of gifts at Gecko in the Gardens.

One of the best features of the new site is the advice, written specifically for the Auckland region, by the people who know it best (check out their smiling faces in the 'Meet the staff' section).



Botanic Gardens Adult Workshops

Introduction to Permaculture Workshop with Joe Polaischer

Full day workshop: Saturday 28 October or Sunday 29 October 10am -3pm

Cost: \$20.00 per person, \$15.00 Friends member, Limited places – bookings essential 09 267 1457 ext 201

Do you want to reduce your ecological footprint and live more sustainably? Permaculture is the harmonious integration of landscape and people providing their own food, energy, shelter and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way.

This one day workshop gives an overview of permaculture ethics, principles and techniques. Practical examples of the principles in action will be explained. Edible landscapes (gardens and orchard), energy efficiency, ecologically friendly housing, and much more.

Spring has Sprung!

Saturday 2 September 11am to 2pm and Sunday 3 September 11am to 2pm

Cost: \$15.00 per person, \$10.00 Friends member, Limited places – bookings essential 09 267 1457 ext 201

- Learn from the experts how to maximise enjoyment from your spring garden, while preparing for the onset of summer.
- Handy tips to reduce summer watering and weeding.
- Plan maximum success from your plants' performance for an abundant garden that looks great too.
- Learn how and when to sow your spring seeds.