

Whangarei Safari 2011- Saturday 15 October
Hosted by the Mid North Group

The hall at the Heritage Park was buzzing at 9am on Sat 15th of October, as NZ Iris members registered for Safari, caught up with old friends, and purchased plants and raffle tickets (wonderful raffles).

It was a fine but coolish morning, and we knew that like most of the country things were late as spring had been slow to arrive. However we all knew we would see lots of exciting things.

We left for the first garden at 10am, Minnie Whitehead's in Maungatapere. This was just a lovely spot with all the natural features of volcanic rocks, bush and water

There were some lovely Louisiana's coming into bud in the ponds and lovely short scenic walks into patches of bush. Lots of peep peeps from the kingfishers as we enjoyed the garden or sat in one of the many attractive structures.

After a buy up of plants we travelled onto Noeline Hilliers garden, just up the road. This was also a beautiful setting with the garden surrounding the lovely old villa. There were some wonderful Spuria's here. I was particularly smitten by the mass planting of Geranium "Biokova" in the rose garden, lovely. Noeline has a quirky sense of humour; I especially liked "Tea Thyme" a thyme bed accompanied by tea pots. We had a few heavy showers as we concluded our walk, so dashed to our cars & returned to the hall for lunch.

Due to Gwen Henderson's ill health a replacement garden had been arranged in Maunu. This was a pretty little suburban garden with vegs mixed in with the flowers, some nice PC irises here. I'm sure I heard the owner say she had only been there for a year.

I had heard a great deal about the quarry garden so was pleased it was on the agenda. What an achievement, we had a wonderful guided tour with the history explained to us. I was interested to see the Choriso as I had recently planted this unusual tree in my new garden. It was very sheltered and warm in the quarry so we were pleased to have cold drinks and afternoon tea. Debbie did a roaring trade selling Louisiana irises.

A few of the visitors-- the majority I suspect--called into Sciadopitys (love that name) garden centre on our way back to our accommodation. We all bought something, I think the staff were rather surprised to have this big group of customers late on a hot Saturday afternoon.

After a tidy up we all met up at 6pm for dinner and the drawing of the raffles. It had been a great day, everything had run smoothly and we had seen four very different gardens.

Thank you Mid North Group.
Janet Matthews