

Whangarei Safari 2011- Sunday 16 October  
Hosted by the Mid North Group

Our first garden on Sunday took us through Waipu Cove, past beautiful Langs Beach to Mangawhai and the garden of Annette Thompson. We were greeted with a lovely spread for morning tea and a very delightful mixed border with several PCs in flower along with many other lovely flowering plants. The lawns swept down to cover native plantings and a view of the water in the background.

We then moved on to Janet Pranker's garden which was set beautifully on a slope leading down to a pond. Here we saw a lovely planting of Agave set against a painted wall, a perfect picture. Iris TB 'Berry Blush' was in flower here but we only got a peep of colour from the Louisianas – just a bit early this year to really enjoy the irises. However, there were plenty of spring delights, Cornus, Hippeastrums and the beautiful sweep of lawn was so pleasing to the eye.

Our third garden was also in Mangawhai and was the home of Jan Grover who is a very talented artist as well as gardener. We were treated to beautiful views of Little Barrier Island. She also had a pond, lovely planting of Grevillea and native pongas with red Vireyas peeping through. Here the Iris TB 'Zapped' was in flower and a large clump of what we thought was *I. kochii*. We all admired Jan's artwork which was on display.

Our last garden before lunch was that of Barbara Hockenull and this was refreshingly different. Lots of interest in this garden with pottery, some TB's in flower, Evansias, Wisteria and beautiful specimens of the Poor Knights lily. Alongside was the Smashed Pipi Gallery which displayed many very beautiful items for sale, including those made by Barbara herself.

After a very tasty lunch at the Domain, our first stop was at Chris Quin's garden where we saw a huge display of sub-tropical plants and trees and an amazing collection of palms including Kentia, Queen and Nikau to name a few. Also on display was a beautiful specimen of *Dietes robinsoniana* just in first flush of flower, also called "the Wedding Iris" originating from Lord Howe Island.

Our last garden, and our last beautifully served afternoon tea before we all departed, was just out of Kaiwaka at Lyn Parker's home. The drive swept down from the road flanked by Prunus 'Awanui', sweeping lawns and their home built on the edge of a very large pond. We were greeted by a beautiful bowl of delicate flowering orchid pleione and that was only one of the treasures in this garden. We took a path down towards the lake and along a damp area where Baby's Tears and violets grew intermingled underplanted beneath weeping willows. There were large plantings of Louisianas which again teased us by just showing colour, but lots of buds so we could only imagine what a sight it will be in a few weeks time. This is a large garden, five acres Lyn tells us and we could only guess at how much time she must spend to keep it so immaculate. We saw *Iris nelsonii* in flower, *Campanula glomerata* 'Caroline', bright Kniphofia, lots of Rugosa roses just starting to bloom and shrubs and trees too many to mention. We climbed up towards the road to a fantastic view of the garden, house and pond and on towards the hills of Pukeka with the Cattle Mounts Range in the background.

Piki Carroll thanked the Group on behalf of us all and presented Lyn Parker with the South Canterbury Species Trek Trophy for her clump of *Spuria Iris orientalis*. The Mid North Group truly entertained, fed and delighted us this weekend and we are very grateful to them for their magnificent efforts.

Thank you Mid North Group.  
Christina Braybrook