

While Covid 19, and supply issues generally, have resulted in slow progress for projects at the Bason, it is a pleasure to see movement at last.



Around the Lake Walkway:



Loaders Whanganui have completed the final portion of the Around the Lake Walkway, adding a section of pathway between the Japanese Tea House and the weir to the west of the lake.

This final section takes pedestrians off the road and encourages them to explore the northern side

of the lake and the expansive views over Picnic Flat and back to Millennium Hill.

Sculptor, Ivan Vostinar has crafted seating, which is placed to offer the most spectacular of these views.



Ivan has also been commissioned to produce a sculpture, which will sit on a platform a few metres away from the seat and be sufficiently large to be seen as a distinctive feature from Picnic Flat, thus inviting visitors to explore the new walkway. It is hoped the sculpture will be completed before this summer. This work has been funded by bequests.

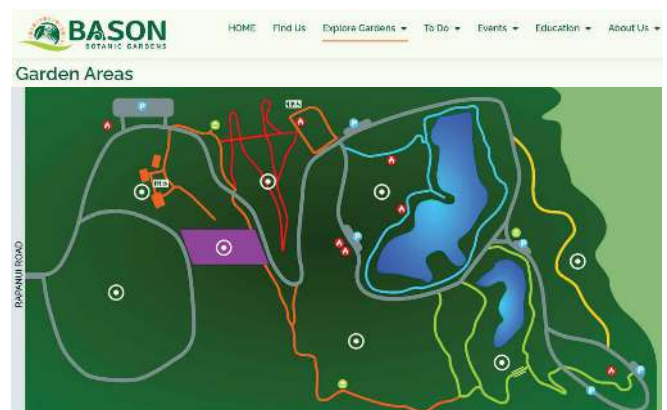
Shakespeare in the Park returns:

The Merry Wives of Windsor, originally planned for last summer, will now be staged in the Bason amphitheatre during the last week of February 2023. There have been exciting new

additions to Karen Craig's production team and this play promises to be a real blast. It will be a treat for all, players and audience alike. Mark it in your diary now!

Website Developments:

Lidy Schouw, our own webmaster, has re-constructed our website <https://basonbotanicgardens.com/> to give far more information and be easier to navigate around. You will find a new, interactive map of the gardens, <https://basonbotanicgardens.com/explore-gardens/> to link to images of the different garden areas shown in that map. Lidy is also building a database of plants and images, that can be viewed from links within those garden areas. This will be an ongoing project that continues to develop.



A Hidden Gem:

While visitor numbers continue to increase, many Whanganui people still know nothing of the gardens. We are always looking to attract new groups to explore them. It is therefore encouraging to see the WDC looking at possibilities of funding a cycleway, from the Great North Rd, past the Bason Botanic Gardens, to Mowhanau. We are already making tentative plans to bring such a cycleway into and around the gardens, should the cycleway become a reality.

Please, encourage groups you may know of, no matter who, to explore our beautiful gardens and discover the quiet pleasures they offer. This is a wonderful resource. Please spread the word.

Terry Dowdeswell
Chair - Bason Botanic Gardens Trust



Aloe barberae (bainesii)



Agave atrovirens

My Favourite Biggies

Aloe

There will be, no matter what time of the year, an aloe species flowering, but it's fair to say that the best or rather the most widespread flowering is now, winter. My favourite aloe, *Aloe bainesii* is busy doing its thing now. We've made quite a feature of this aloe at the BBG. It's not the showiest aloe flower, a soft reddish pink but, being the largest aloe, a tree to perhaps 10 metres, it's still quite a sight. Check them out on Mill Hill; also one on the lawn by the conservatories.

Agave

In particular a patch of agaves on the right just before the road turn-off to the old house. (Here's a thought: the roads at the BBG need names, and to be signposted.) This was a planting I did when it was possible for us keen BBG supporters to physically help and do things. It was after the time of the parks department empire-building, when we were discouraged from doing anything, but before the current time of Health & Safety, when it's assumed we're all incapable idiots.

Don Stevenson, then curator, was a fan of large garden beds, so I did one with some *Araucaria columnaris* and these agaves. Peter Cave

Become a Friend of the Bason

To Receive:

Periodic newsletters highlighting plants and upcoming events
Special offers on plants and/or seeds of special Bason plants.

Register here: <http://basonbotanicgardens.com/support-us/>

To Volunteer

On the last Tuesday of each month our Bason volunteers meet in the vicinity of the Homestead Garden, where they may be involved in potting up, weeding and general maintenance.

Contact: Janice 06 3442495 or John 06 3456417

Sponsors and benefactors

These wonderful people enable dreams to become realities. If you would like to make a project donation, an endowment or gift of a memorial feature please contact the BBG Trust

Email here: basonbotanicgardens@gmail.com

BOOKINGS: Direct all Botanic Gardens venue/BBQ bookings to the Customer Service Desk

Whanganui District Council, phone 349 0001.

CONTACTS:

Chairman

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grew the araucarias and I propagated the agaves from two plants we had here at Paloma. One had flowered and these were bulblets. When they flower some agaves, as well as seed pods, or instead of, produce bulblets, similar to furcraeas. This agave has an interesting history here in New Zealand. Firstly, we're not sure if it's been properly identified. I call it *Agave atrovirens* but, to be frank, it's a guess. It was introduced to NZ in the late 1980s by an Auckland friend, Michael Poulgrain. He's a great plantsman and did many plant-collecting trips overseas. He became concerned at the treatment, or lack thereof, of the locals in some of these very poor areas and he went and stayed and worked in some of these

far-flung places, a bit like VSA. On one of these trips in Mexico, he was up a hill, throwing rocks in an attempt to knock seed pods off this massive agave. After a while he became aware he was causing the need for locals, downhill from him, to evacuate. The hillside was sparsely covered in oak and pine scrub, obscuring his activities and when he departed, he felt he was regarded as a lunatic. I well remember coming back from an Auckland plant trip with two little seedlings from that hillside in Mexico. It's a big, beautiful agave and the area needs a bit of a tidy-up, easier said than done, but worth the effort!

Clive Higgin

The 2022 AGM of the Bason Botanic Garden Trust

will be held in the SeniorNet rooms, Community Arts Centre, 19 Taupo Quay, Wanganui

Entrance at the back of the Community Arts Centre building.

Follow signs to SeniorNet. All are welcome.

Date Thursday 18th August - Time 7pm

Snakes in the Garden?

Winter is a great time to visit the Millennium Hill to view the Aloe collection, planted in 2007 thanks to a generous donation from Heather Giltrap this collection has grown over the years and now boasts a wide selection of mature plants including an avenue of the *Aloe bainesii* (or the tree aloe). These slow growing large African succulents are in bud now with a delicate apricot pink flower that provides a useful boost of winter nectar to Tui.

Beside the avenue of tree aloes is a weird display of what looks like giant yellow pythons, but relax, these are the flowers of *Agave attenuata* (see next page) or the foxtail agave. This large, rosette forming grey blue *Agave* native of central Mexico, sends up a flower stalk that can reach 3m in length, given the length and weight of the stalk they tend to bend in a graceful arch, each stalk is covered in a mass of lemon yellow flowers which can form seed pods and a host of new pups that can be grown on to form new plants.

While the rosette dies after flowering, as these plants tend to grow in a clump the other rosettes or suckers) will grow to cover the gap or in the clump.

Unlike many of the other *Agaves*, *Agave attenuata* doesn't have sharp spines as it grows from pups or suckers it is often seen in domestic gardens were its rhizomatous

root structure makes it a useful (if somewhat large) plant to grow on banks, as in the Bason's Millennium Hill. Other *Agaves* grown nearby include the spiky versions such as *Agave colorata* *Agave parryi* and *Agave geminiflora*. Most of the *Agaves* are native to various regions of Mexico.

Also in this area and very showy at this time of year are the winter flowering Aloes including *Aloe africana* (African aloe) which can grow into a tree like plant, and it's close but even more spiky version *Aloe ferox*, (the fierce or woody aloe). Less spiky and with a more showy flower is *Aloe rupestris* (the bottle brush aloe) *Aloe thraskill* (the candelabra or dune aloe) Not as tall, but equally as showy is *Aloe polyphylla* (spiral aloe) which grows as a large barrel like plant in a complex spiral pattern. While some Aloes tend to be more upright and singular growing plants, other aloes like to grow in massive clumps such as *Aloe arborescens* (torch aloe) and *Aloe spinosissima* (spider aloe). Most of the Aloes are native to parts of Africa.

So, if you think winter can be a bit drab and are looking for a shot of colour, come out and take a wander down the Millennium Hill to check out these showy succulants... no need to worry about snakes.

Hel Loader



Agave colorata (mature plant)



Agave attenuata



Agave potatorum



Agave polyphylla (spiral Aloe)



Agave attenuata



Agave stricta



Agave parrasana



Aloidendron barberae



Aloe thraskii (dune Aloe)



Aloe spinosissima



Aloe arborescens (torch Aloe)



Aloe rupestris

This is an article about tea ceremonies at the tea house in the Bason Botanic Gardens, as written by Mizuho Kawano.

Tea ceremonies at the Japanese tea house

Since 1988, Whanganui - Nagaizumi have been building up their relationship and many events such as the tea ceremony occurred at the Friendship centre when it was in Whanganui East. The Friendship centre was a physical connection hub, but after it closed there has gradually been a lessening of the connection between the cities. Bason Botanic Reserve provided a perfect spot but the tea house became a relic.

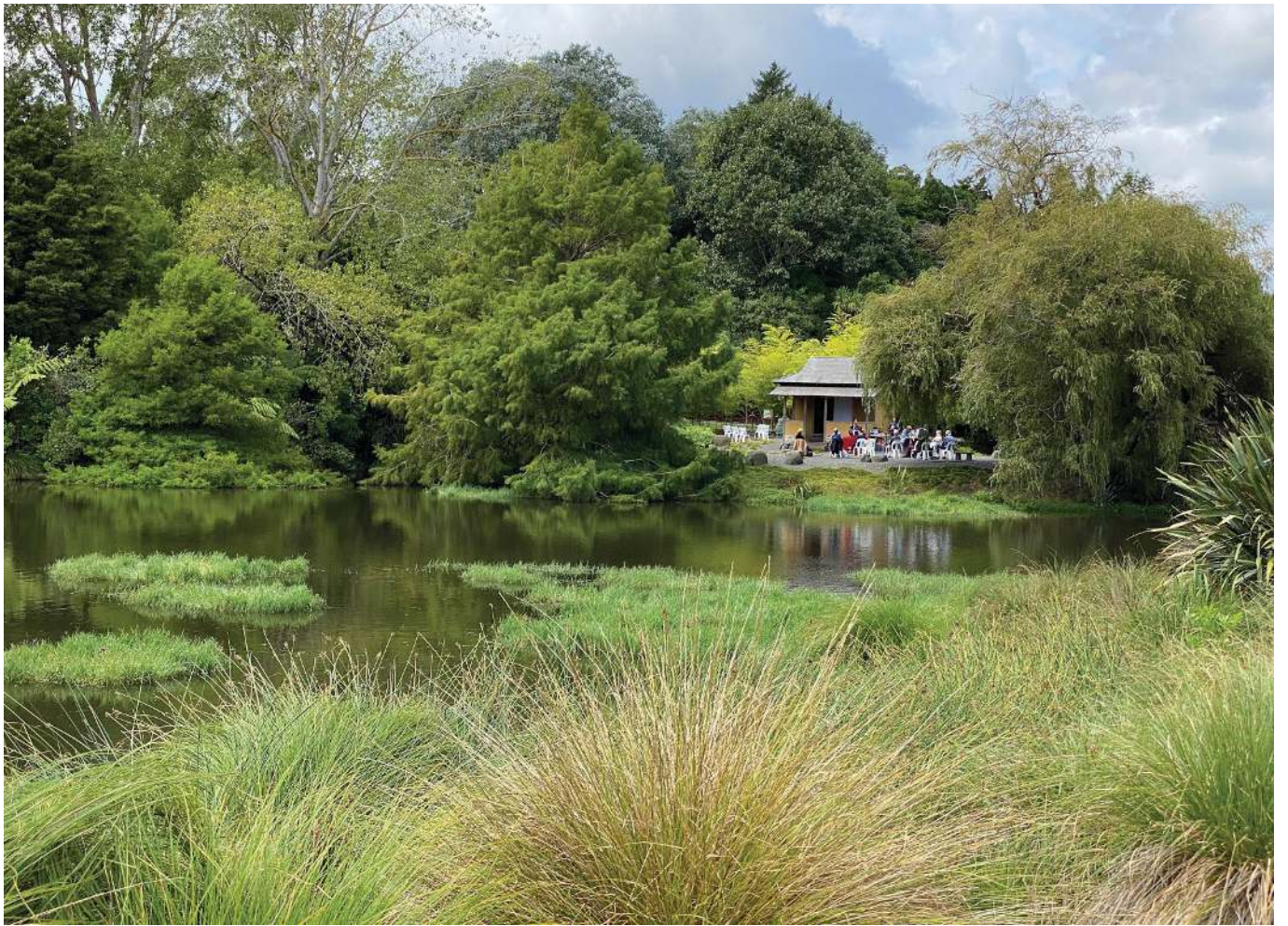
After meeting with the District Council, I was looking at Nagaizumi's homepage because I'm not from Nagaizumi, and only moved to Whanganui 3 years ago. I didn't know anything about our sister city and I needed to learn about it. Then I found that the tea house was built by a Japanese carpenter in Japan, totally dismantled and sent to Whanganui with special carpenters because they wished that Whanganui people would know real Japanese culture and they wanted to deepen the bond with Whanganui. Nagaizumi was also doing New Zealand weeks, "Kia Ora Nagaizumi", to learn about Whanganui / New Zealand. For example, cafés are selling "Flat White", a restaurant is serving "fish and chips", and displaying photographs of Whanganui scenery. I was so impressed and strongly felt they are trying to maintain the relationship.

Having a tea ceremony is not just sharing Japanese culture, but also reminding Whanganui people about their sister city in Japan. I had never learnt the tea ceremony before, but I thought I have to do something as a Japanese. Building a relationship has never happened with one side only. From April, another Japanese and myself have been doing a monthly Whanganui report to Nagaizumi people. They are not able to come to Whanganui / New Zealand, but they can feel and explore it remotely. One of the topics in April was the Bason Botanic Reserve.

We were doing the tea ceremony outside at the Tea House. Sometimes it is a bit windy and it was hard to use paper cups and a portable gas cooker. Also at the second ceremony, it was drizzling. A benefit is the location. Especially as the bamboo is growing so beautifully, and the lake perfectly matched the tea house.

We did two sessions and each session had a maximum of 15 (because of COVID and the capacity of the space). The day before the ceremony, there was heavy rain and in the morning also. Some people cancelled because of the weather but fortunately the rain had stopped and people could join the ceremony. I heard a very positive response from the District Council and also after the ceremony people were really appreciative. They were very surprised that Nagaizumi sent some equipment for the ceremony (Special green tea, Sweets for the tea ceremony etc). One older couple came to talk to me. The lady said this ceremony is Valentine's present for her husband because he is interested in Japanese culture. Another one, a mother and son told me that he is interested in Japanese culture so she brought him after school. There were people from different backgrounds, a range of ages, and different reasons.

Mizuho Kawano





c/- PO Box 778, Wanganui

