



**Taranaki
Rhododendron &
Garden
Festival**
29 October - 7 November 2010

The New Zealand Garden Experience
www.rhodo.co.nz

Media Release

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Rhodo Festival launches with a planet saving message

Gardeners can save humanity on this planet is the message given by Bugman Ruud Kleinpaste to launch the 23rd annual Taranaki Rhododendron & Garden Festival today.

“The world has been turning on its axis for some 4.5 billion years—and it has heated and cooled many times,” says Ruud.

“It has survived without a carbon credit in sight. All we need to do is help redress the balance and that begins with gardeners in their gardens capturing carbon dioxide in plants and using the natural world as a remedy.”

Humans are the only species that believes carbon dioxide is harmful—but the rest of nature uses it to produce trunks, leaves, fruits, flowers and coral reefs, explains Ruud.

“We live in a planet that is intrinsically of biological origin, and gardeners, of course, know this all too well. This planet is not run by politicians, oil companies, television executives, economists, stock markets, lawyers, or Professors of Universities.

“Everything is subjected to the laws of biology and ecology, whether we like it or not, and one of the most important things to realize is that we are part of this ecological system; certainly not superior to it. Oh... and we can learn so much from nature!”

So the nearly 50 quality gardens in this year’s Rhododendron Festival running from October 29 to November 7 are doing their bit to save the planet according to Ruud.

The gardens, including inner city potager gardens, native gardens, and classic rambling country gardens covering many acres have an incredible plant and insect biodiversity to help save the planet—and intrigue visitors, says Festival manager, Lisa Ekdahl.

“Sustainable gardening has been a theme that we have been nurturing in the last few Festivals,” says Lisa.

“This year we have three dedicated vegetable gardens, and one of guest speakers, Fiona Hill, will be hosting a garden speaker event on how to grow edible plants known as micro-greens.”

The Festival's garden line up includes nine new gardens as well as Gardens of Significance including one of International Significance as awarded by the independent New Zealand Gardens Trust. The new gardens are Taunt Garden, Pukemara, Waiongana, Gateway Garden, Lockinge Garden, Wards' garden and Wintringham with Merleswood returning to the festival this year.

The Festival's Landscape Design Project is once again going to be a completely novel idea with a "vertical garden" being created on the exterior walls of an inner city building. The lush tapestry of plants is being designed and created by Tracey Peryman—director and designer of Vertical Landscapes.

Tracey's 'Living Wall' as she describes it will grow directly on the Brougham Street façade of the Taranaki Arts Festival office building and will be opened to the public just prior to the Festival.

There will also be a great line up of guest speakers, guided walks and events during the 10-day Festival. For more information, visit www.rhodo.co.nz, or pick up a Festival programme from any Visitor Information Centre.

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