



NEW ZEALAND GARDENS TRUST

*Discover Distinctive Gardens*

# Information Pack

# INDEX

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INTRODUCTION	1
HOW THE TRUST FUNCTIONS	1
BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP	2
HOW WE ASSESS OUR GARDENS; STAR DESCRIPTIONS	2 -3
CATEGORIES AND MEMBERSHIP FEES	4
GARDEN ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL	5
GARDEN OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES	6
ASSESSMENT FORM – GUIDE ONLY	7- 9

# Introduction

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The NZ Gardens Trust (NZGT) is a charitable trust established in 2003 by New Zealand's only national horticultural body, the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (RNZIH), to assess gardens for the public to visit.

## What We Do

- Promote our distinctive NZ Gardens Trust gardens to national and international visitors. |
- Promote excellence in gardening. Promote the benefits of gardens and gardening.
- Provide the 'go-to' resource for discovering distinctive gardens.
- Use a robust system of assessment that guarantees a quality visitor experience.
- Maintain and develop relationships with industry-related entities such as Tourism New Zealand, local government, RNZIH, plant producers etc.
- Promote collegiality and educational opportunities for members.
- Deliver our highly anticipated annual conference for members.
- Broaden our garden categories to include more diverse gardens and collections.

## What is an NZGT Garden?

- An NZGT garden is assessed to a standard identified for the public through the star rating system (see page 2). The garden must be open to the public and presented to its assessed standard for a reasonable number of days each year (eg during a Garden Festival or Charity fund-raising) and/or by appointment to individual visitors for a cumulative period of two months in the year.
- NZGT members are welcome to arrange to visit other NZGT gardens. Part of belonging is collegiality.

## How the Trust functions

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A Trust Board, minimum of 5 trustees, maximum of 8 is elected at the AGM held during the annual conference. Each trustee serves for a term of three years, eligible for reappointment for further terms but can be a trustee for no more than nine years.

The current 2023 trustees of the New Zealand Gardens Trust are:

Wendy Palmer (Chairperson) – Welton House and Eliza's Garden Cottage, Blenheim

Jennifer Horner (Deputy Chair) - Puketarata, South Taranaki

Mel Haskell – Casa Rossa, Christchurch

Wolfgang Bopp – Director, Christchurch Botanic Gardens

Susan Gifford - Independent

Daryl Spooner – Mincher, Auckland

Hamish Saxton – CEO, Hawkes Bay Tourism

Victoria Read is employed by the NZGT manage the interface of garden owners, assessors and to undertake administration.

Our team of voluntary assessors is drawn from respected and qualified landscape architects, horticulturalists, and plantspeople from all over New Zealand. Each year, two assessors visit member gardens due for re-assessment on a 3-year rotation and assess any new gardens who have applied for membership.

## Benefits of Membership

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NZGT is committed to raising the standards of garden presentation, design and plantsmanship in New Zealand, and is selective in its choice of member gardens. Gardens are assessed and evaluated by independent assessors drawn from the horticultural industry, consisting of respected landscape architects and designers and highly experienced horticulturalists. Membership of the NZGT is a mark of distinction.

- As a member you can take part in our annual conferences (NZGT and RNZIH) benefiting from:
  - many networking opportunities, learning and sharing of information in a collegial atmosphere.
  - informative and educational guest speakers.
  - garden visits to exceptional and unique gardens and locations.
  - Opportunities to share plants and plant material at the annual plant auctions.
- You will have a listing on our easy to navigate NZGT website which puts visitors in touch with NZGT gardens and provides necessary garden information and contact details.
- NZGT has strong brand and marketing tools in the easily recognised logo, the continual assessment of member gardens, online directory of gardens and promotional materials. You are encouraged to use these tools in your own marketing planning.
- Membership of a group of accredited gardens provides opportunities for targeted marketing to visitors, as our information is used by overseas tourism groups, independent travellers, local tour operators and regional/local information centres.
- Receive regular NZGT updates, access to social media groups for sharing, advice, plants, etc
- Membership of Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture which includes the official RNZIH journal.

## How we assess our gardens

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All gardens are assessed. Our team of assessors visit NZGT gardens across the country during late October/November. Garden owners are advised of their results in January and garden details and images are then added to the website directory. After the initial assessment, gardens are re-assessed 3-yearly.

The form on page 7 provides a sample of the assessment marking schedule.

Depending upon the result of the assessment, your garden will fall into one of the categories below.

## 6 Star – Garden of International Significance

These are New Zealand's top NZGT gardens, offering the visitor a guaranteed quality destination throughout the year. 6 Star gardens achieve and maintain the highest levels of presentation, design and plant interest at all times of the year and provide good facilities for individuals and tours. They may be uniquely designed private gardens or publicly funded gardens, with widely different attributes. Whatever they offer is delivered to the very highest standard as defined by NZGT. Presentation is always of the highest order, and the garden is a model of the very best horticultural practice. These gardens are a complete package, and the feelings they inspire lifts them above other extremely good national gardens.

Gardens nominated for this category are chosen by the entire assessing team.

## 5 Star – Garden of National Significance

These are gardens which we highly recommend visiting. We have confidence in their level of presentation, design and plant interest throughout the year, and their capacity to provide adequate facilities for visitors. 5 Star Gardens are outstanding in most ways, and have a distinct identity of their own, a character that gives them an edge.

5 Star Gardens exhibit good design, good plant collections, and are well maintained, especially in their identified optimum season(s). They show attention to detail. Informative signage, and plants are used in imaginative and innovative ways. They may have features appealing to specialist interests.

## 4 Star – Garden of Significance

4 Star Gardens display a high degree of design and plantsmanship. They have some special attributes that distinguishes them from our 3 Star category – perhaps design or an important plant collection. A consistent level of maintenance is a key factor, as is the overall presentation of the garden, especially during the open season.

## 3 Star – Notable Garden

3 Star Gardens have been assessed to ensure that the information we publish is correct and describes each garden accurately. They are of a reasonable standard, having adequate maintenance, especially in their identified optimum season. They have an acceptable design without over ornamentation.

There are excellent gardens listed under this category that are well worth a visit.

*Please Note: Membership is subject to our Terms and Conditions.*

# Garden Membership Categories and Fees for 2023.

Please Note: Annual fees are reviewed in November of each year

<p>Each Garden has a web page on the NZGT site (<a href="http://www.gardens.org.nz">www.gardens.org.nz</a>) featuring six images and detailed information about the garden.</p> <p><b>Application fee: \$100. This fee covers your application and first assessment. If successful, annual fees will be payable for subsequent membership years which run from January to December.</b></p>	
<p><b>Annual membership fees</b></p> <p><b>All figures include gst</b></p> <p>Notable Garden (3 stars) \$294.40</p>	<p>Two assessors re-inspect each Notable Garden every 3 years to ensure that the information recorded is still accurate.</p>
<p>Significant Garden (4 – 6 stars) \$458.85</p> <p>Significant Garden (4 – 6 stars) with an operational budget over \$80,000 \$914.25</p>	<p>Two assessors undertake a formal critique to determine whether your garden merits the high standard required for endorsement as a Garden of Significance (4 stars).</p> <p>Gardens which attain high scores are selected as a Gardens of National (5 stars) or International (6 stars) Significance.</p> <p>Re-inspection occurs every three years to ensure that the high standards have been maintained.</p>
<p>All annual fees include annual membership of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.</p> <p>See the RNZIH website (<a href="http://www.rnzih.org.nz">www.rnzih.org.nz</a>) for benefits of belonging to this organisation.</p> <p>The NZGT administers this process on behalf of each garden.</p>	

# Garden Assessment Process

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## Garden owner(s) are requested to:

- Meet the Assessor/s at the agreed time.
- Discuss your garden with the Assessor/s for a few minutes to provide a brief overview of the garden. You can also take a first walk around the garden with the assessors prior to allowing them to view the garden unaccompanied.
- Indicate the extent and limitation of the garden area subject to assessment.
- Discuss the garden description that was supplied at the time of application. Assessors may have some suggestions to add. They will have the information from the website as background.
- Notify the Assessor/s of any specific hazards in your garden that they might encounter while undertaking the assessment.
- Grant the Assessor/s unrestricted access to your garden.
- Answer any questions the Assessor/s may have, following the assessment.
- You can also seek 10 minutes of informal feedback after the visit. However, please refrain from asking Assessor/s the assessment score. Garden owners will be notified of their endorsement in mid December, once all gardens have been assessed.

## The Garden Assessor/s will:

- Advise the garden owner(s) of their arrival at your garden.
- Ensure the assessment is conducted within the specified area of your garden, supported by the written description.
- Assess your garden, using the Garden Assessment form as a guide and on behalf of a potential visitor. Garden owner(s) will have been sent a copy of this assessment form earlier. The final decision on endorsement is made once all assessments have been completed and the standard compared to other gardens.
- Undertake the assessment proficiently within a realistic timeframe. Advise the garden owner(s) of their departure.
- The assessors are volunteering their time to assess gardens for the NZGT. They may be travelling large distances between gardens in unfamiliar territory. As this is a garden assessment process, unfortunately there is neither the time nor the opportunity to offer landscaping advice.

## Garden Criteria

- Gardens must be open to the public for a minimum reasonable number of days per annum. This can be by appointment to individual visitors for a minimum period of two months..
- Gardens must be maintained to the same standard presented at the assessment visit throughout the period the garden is open to the public. If there have been changes (trees fallen/dead plants), replanting should be undertaken as soon as practicable or otherwise, the affected area should be roped off.
- If the public request a garden visit outside the advertised period the garden is open and the garden is not up to the standard it was assessed at, the visitor must be advised accordingly and a “no fees policy” should be adopted.
- Garden owners shall be polite and hospitable to garden visitors. Remember visitors are paying money to visit the garden.
- Garden owners should not enter into any negative discussion about attributes of any other Trust garden, with their visitors. They may recommend other gardens to visit.
- **Garden owners will include in their website information, any garden attributes of national significance which could influence an assessment grade. This information should be verified by accompanying recognition from a recognised expert in the area. If this information is not included, it will be ignored by the assessors. Examples include Historic Places Trust listings and national or regionally significant plant collections.**
- Garden owners shall advise the NZGT of any changes to their gardens which may affect the current grading of the garden. This includes but is not limited to: storm/flooding damage; an owner’s inability to tend the garden owing to illness. This notification should be made within one month after the change has occurred so that an advisory note can be placed on the website. The owner will have a year to upgrade the garden to its previous standard after which, the garden will be reassessed. The owner may voluntarily relinquish the current category.
- Garden owners shall advise if they want to defer immediate assessments for any reason and explain why. If assessments are deferred, an advisory notice will be placed on the website. Garden owners will have one year to restore the garden to its previous standard. The garden will be reassessed at the end of the one year period, or the garden owner may voluntarily relinquish the current category.
- Garden owners are encouraged to provide updated material for their section of the NZGT website by emailing the Trust Administrator at any time.
- The NZGT reserves the right to withhold or edit information on the website.
- Garden owners should explore their need for public liability insurance.



## Onsite responsibilities - Hazards

- At all times the gardens open to visitors shall be kept in hazard-free condition.
- Unsafe areas must be identified and cordoned off.
- Hoses not in use must be put away, or if they are in use, hazard notices must be posted.
- Tools and equipment must not be accessible to visitors.
- Areas under construction must be roped off.
- Steps and paths must have appropriate grades and surfaces or be signposted with warnings where applicable.
- Structures in the garden must be in a sound and safe condition.
- A list of hazards must be provided to visitors (handouts or signage). Examples of hazards include poisonous plants; branches or trees that may fail in high winds; narrow and steep paths; and pest possibility (bees/wasps).

# New Zealand Gardens Trust

Discover Distinctive Gardens

## Assessment 2023 Guidelines

Garden Design		Points	
<p><b>Spatial Layout:</b> Composition of spaces: Scale, proportion and nature of the spaces (grand, intimate, fresh, reflective). The way they are put together, how they read, how you perceive them.</p>	1-6 Poorly laid out. Un-cohesive		/20
	7-14 Composed well, with some un-cohesive areas.		
	15-20 Excellent composition		
<p><b>Hierarchy of spaces:</b> Appropriate relationship of spaces to house or buildings, surroundings and to each other. Spaces close to house relate to house. Spaces further away stand by themselves. Good use of built features.</p>	1-3 Inappropriate spatial relationship.		/10
	4-7 Most areas of the garden have appropriate spatial layout.		
	8-10 Excellent hierarchy of spaces.		
<p><b>Circulation:</b> Logical sequence (flow) though the site. Clear start &amp; end; key areas are linked; hierarchy of paths. Well defined, logical order from one space to the next. Visitor is drawn from one place to the next.</p>	1-3 No logical flow. Unlinked paths. Dead ends.		/10
	4-7 Most of the garden flows. Occasional undefined routes.		
	8-10 Well defined, logical order from one space to the next. Clear start and end, with key areas linked.		
<p><b>Garden Style:</b> Creative, artistic, representative or unique. Pleasantly fresh or different, e.g. formal, contemporary, rural, urban, native, courtyard etc.</p>	1-3 Garden style uncreative, undefined.		/10
	4-7 Good garden style, but not consistent across whole garden.		
	8-10 Whole garden creative, artistic, representative or unique.		
<p><b>Elements of Design 1:</b> Lines in the garden: Borders, hedges, vistas etc. How materials are used to create or frame spaces/rooms, views, borrowed scenery and whether or not it is appropriate</p>	1-3 Poor design elements. No use of borrowed landscape.		/10
	4-7 Most elements appropriately enhance design.		
	8-10 Excellent use of lines in the garden: Borders, hedges, vistas etc.		
<p><b>Elements of Design 2:</b> Use of materials to create rhythm: Repetition of elements, unity, harmony, balance, variety, contrast, mystery etc.</p>	1-3 Elements in the garden grate against each other.		/10
	4-7 Occasional use of design elements to create rhythm		
	8-10 Excellent use of rhythm: Repetition of elements, unity, harmony, balance, variety, contrast, mystery etc.		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>/70</b>

<b>Design of Hard Landscape</b>			
<b>Style:</b> Are constructed elements appropriate to garden style? Use of hard surfacing, walls, fences, pergolas, paths, water features etc.	<b>1-3 Constructed elements conflict with garden style.</b>  <b>4-7 Constructed elements appropriate to garden style.</b>  <b>8-10 Constructed elements enhance garden experience.</b>		/10
<b>Construction:</b> Craftsmanship - hard surfacing, walls, fences, pergolas, paths, water features etc.	<b>1-3 Poor Construction, Degrading or hazardous. Needs replacement</b>  <b>4-7 Good Construction. Sound and fit for purpose.</b>  <b>8-10 Well Constructed. Appropriate materials. Excellent workmanship.</b>		/10
<b>Artwork, sculpture, Incidentals:</b> Appropriate use of incidentals, artwork, sculpture, furniture, pots.	<b>1-3 Incidentals detract from garden experience</b>  <b>4-7 Appropriate use of incidentals, artwork, sculpture, furniture, pots.</b>  <b>8-10 Incidentals enhance the garden experience</b>		/10
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>/30</b>

<b>Planting Design</b>			
<b>Plant Use:</b> Appropriate use of plants in relation to microclimate, plant environmental preferences.	1-6 Inappropriate plants for location. 7-14 Plants appropriate in relation to microclimate, plant environmental preferences. 15-20 Excellent plant use for location.		/20
<b>Innovation:</b> Plant use shows innovation or flair.	1-6 Plant use uninspiring 7-14 Good plant use but as expected for type. 15-20 Plant use shows innovation or flair.		/20
<b>Composition:</b> Plants form a pleasant composition of form, line, colour, texture and pattern.	1-6 Composition detracts from experience 7-14 Good composition 15-20 Excellent composition of form, line, colour, texture and pattern.		/20
<b>Cover:</b> Cover over ground: adequate/excellent/poor.	1-3 Poor ground cover 4-7 Adequate ground cover. Occasional discrepancies 8-10 Excellent cover throughout garden		/10
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>/70</b>
<b>Horticulture &amp; Maintenance - Excellent, good, average, poor.</b>			
<b>Soft landscape general:</b> General appearance of garden beds, soils and turf quality	1-6 Beds/lawns appear tired with immediate need for renovation 7-14 Good general appearance of garden beds, soils and turf quality 15-20 Excellent overall appearance of garden		/20
<b>Plant quality and health</b> Do the plants look healthy; are they insect-free?	1-6 Poor quality with obvious signs of disease, decline 7-14 Good quality overall with occasional individual lapses. 15-20 Excellent quality throughout garden		/20
<b>Garden border</b> maintenance Weed control, mulch, pruning, line trimming and edges etc	1-6 Poor maintenance across a wide range of criteria in the garden 7-14 Good maintenance with some areas in need of remediation. 15-20 Excellent maintenance in all areas.		/20
<b>Hard-surfaces, structures and furniture</b> In good repair? Weed management in hard surfaces	1-3 Weeds present in paths and hard surfaces 4-7 Occasional areas of hard surfaces in need of maintenance. 8-10 Hard surfaces in great condition and weed free.		/10
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>/70</b>

Overall Impression			
<p><b>'WOW' factor:</b> Harmony and balance of all components. Whole is greater than the sum of its parts, experience, feeling, soul. Do you come away from the garden feeling excited, invigorated or refreshed?</p>	1-10 Garden feels tiered/ non-cohesive		/30
	11-20 Nice garden, cohesive		
	21-30 Come away from the garden feeling excited and invigorated.		
<p><b>Visitor experience:</b> Will the garden have appeal to visitors? Is it photogenic?</p> <p>Does it make you want to take photographs of the garden, not just individual plants?</p>	1-10 Would not return to this garden as a visitor		/30
	11-20 Would take visitors to this garden		
	21-30 A must visit garden		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>/60</b>

Special Attributes*			
<p><b>Plant Collections;</b> Must be verified as a collection eg</p>	Eg: rhodos, conifers, natives, trees.		/5
	Variety and interest; rarity.		
<p><b>Heritage or other special values;</b> Must be listed by NZ Heritage Trust or identified as a Buxton etc garden</p>	Eg: Old trees, designed by Buxton, house by Chapman-Taylor etc.		/5
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>/10</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>/310</b>

<b>Category brackets</b>		6 Star	293 - 310
		5 Star	240 - 292
		4 Star	195 - 239
		3 Star	150 - 194

Additional Matters		

Access	Buses, wheelchairs, parking	yes / no
Toilets	Accessible, clean & in good condition	yes / no
Safety	<p>Does the garden appear safe for visitors?</p> <p>Hazards are identified, appropriate warning signs and barriers are present if required, entrance 'visitor responsibility' and safety information displayed.</p> <p><i>Assessors: please advise garden owners that any areas that are clearly unsafe are to be rectified and NZGT to be advised of the completion of this work before the garden can be listed on the NZGT website.</i></p>	yes / no

#### **\*SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES**

Five points may be added to the score for a garden that has a verifiable attribute. A 'verifiable attribute' is an attribute that has a Heritage New Zealand Historic Places Category 1 or 2 listing, has RNZIH or International Dendrology Society approval as a collection of national significance or is recognised as having been designed by an early garden designer of significance eg: Alfred Buxton. Garden owners must supply verification of the attribute to the Trust with their annual registration before they can be considered.

Five 'verified attribute' points may be added to the score for a garden that has 5 star marks.

A garden that scores 290 points can be considered for the 6 star category if it has 'verified attributes.' Otherwise a garden must score 293 by itself to be considered as a 6 star garden.

Five 'verified attribute' points may be added to the score for a garden that has 4 star marks.

A garden that scores 235 points can be considered for the 5 star category if it has 'verifiable attributes'. Otherwise a garden must score 240 points by itself to be considered as a 5 star garden.

Verifiable attributes cannot be applied to 3 star gardens.