

Meet Vicky, our newest Trustee



Vicky Steele is 43 years old, with a very tolerant partner, Hugh, no children but an extremely spoilt cat.

Vicky, who lives with her partner Hugh in Christchurch has just embarked on self-employment as a consultant/contractor in the e-marketing/graphic design/website area.

“I’m nature mad,” said Vicky. “My pet fetish (outside of my cat and Hugh) is Monarchs. Last year around 200 butterflies emerged from all corners of my Avonhead garden.”

She says that hopefully the late autumn/early winter ones are the same ones who laid eggs on her swan plants a few weeks ago.

Vicky heard about the Monarch Trust at the Christchurch Festival of Flowers.

“My obsession with Monarchs took an even greater upturn – I am now growing my own swan plants and actively attempting to learn all there is know about not only Monarchs, but all NZ butterflies.

Vicky is actively supporting the Trust with her endeavours. She has arranged with two local garden centres to carry Monarch Trust information in the hope of encouraging more members.

“Christchurch in the summer is a fabulous place for a butterfly - the cooler winters kill off a lot of predators - and most garden centres sell out of swan plants within hours of their arrival.”

As well as Vicky, our Trustees are now Barbara Bishop, just outside Ashburton, Shelley Gifford, currently in Ireland, and in Russell Gilly Jackson, Jacqui Knight and Edith Sharpe. Helen McCormack has resigned, as she is now living in Britain.

Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust

September 2006 Newsletter

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Report to Members

It’s been a very exciting and busy three months since our last newsletter.

Exciting news is inside... so read on.

The Butterfly Project is coming closer to your community. This will be the first time in the world that tagging (and recovery) of butterflies has been undertaken using web-based technology, and the manner in which we will be involving communities in counting butterflies (transects) is also a first. We find it very exciting!

We have set up an 0900 number with Telecom (**0900 MONARCH**). Dialling this allows people to leave their name and address details and thus easily become members of the Trust and receive a packet of *Gomphocarpus physocarpus* (Giant Swan Plant) seed. Telecom debits the person’s telephone account with \$25, and will send us a cheque – it’s such an easy way for people to join.

We have been interviewed on GOOD MORNING (TV1) and on radio and in newspapers and magazines about **The Butterfly Project** – this is important as we want to have as many people as possible involved. In the Education Gazette there is an invitation for schools to become involved at no charge - expires end of September.

And we are working hard at our exhibit at the Ellerslie International Flower Show. We will have 27m² in the Yates HortGalore marquee. Many of our members in Auckland and Northland are growing nectar plants and host plants (milkweed) for us and the plans for this event look very... exciting. Sorry to use that word yet again. But it is!

Have you seen the film of the egg hatching on our website? It’s been put to music and it looks as though the wee caterpillar is dancing. If you don’t have internet access you could show this newsletter to someone who does, and they will get as much pleasure out of this movie as you will. It thrills me each time I see it.

If you are looking for gifts there are some wonderful items for sale on our website – ideal as gifts for butterfly lovers, and many of them are easy to send as gifts in the mail. And of course the proceeds of sales helps the Trust.

We will be holding our AGM very soon – we are waiting for the auditor to complete the accounts so we can set a date.

Barbara, Edith, Gilly, Jacqui, Shelley and Vicky – Trustees



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We acknowledge with thanks our sponsors who have made The Butterfly Project possible.



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WANT TO JOIN? It’s so easy! If you dial 0900 MONARCH you can leave your name and address (phone and email are helpful too). Calls cost \$25 but you get membership (\$20) and a packet of Giant Swan Plant seeds worth \$5 - now how easy is that?

More Monarchs

We are united with a common purpose – we want our Monarch butterflies to thrive. ‘More Magnificent Monarchs’ is our catch-cry. Healthier and happy Monarchs mean two things – you need more Milkweed (most people use Swan Plant or the Giant Swan Plant), and you need nectar all year round.

In the North we are well placed for contributing to the website, as we are probably more advanced into the season than the rest of the country. Indeed, over the winter, on warm days, there are Monarchs meandering around Russell, and especially the yard of the oldest church in NZ, Christ Church.

Right now, some of us are battling with snails and slugs, which are eating away at the shoots on the milkweed. Aphids are also another disaster on milkweed. Less milkweed means Monarchs will have less feed, and of course less will survive.

When tips on pest control are in the newsletter, people email or write in with their own ideas. If these are put in the forum, others can search and benefit from them too. Try the forum on the website, and add your ideas there. It’s easy to find – if you don’t have internet access, ask a friend who does. They’ll be happy to help you.

<http://monarch.org.nz/forum/>

You can search on your topic – try putting ‘snails’ into the search box – or you can click on the word of interest in the hot tags at the top of the page.

To contribute, is easy... At the top there is a link to Register. Fill in the details, and a password will be emailed to you. (Write the password down somewhere, so you don’t forget or lose it.) You can now log on (next to the Register link) and join in the discussion. If you’re new to the internet, this might seem complicated, but the security is there to protect us from misuse.

To create a new topic, click on the link to Monarch NZ Trust above the word Views, almost at the bottom of the page. A new page will open, and the form to be completed is at the bottom of this page. Soon other topics will be added as pests begin to bother our Monarchs and/or milkweeds.

Someone wanted to know the difference between a predator and a parasite. A predator kills its prey and eats it. Parasites live in or on the host. Aphids are a parasite of milkweeds. Life and death, predators and parasites, are all a part of nature. Humans have nits and worms (parasites), and we are prey of sharks and snakes (predators). It’s all perfectly natural.

Without some sort of control, there would be a population explosion. Monoculture (farming one species) is not healthy, neither is pesticide use. So we have to manage Monarch pests as best we can. We can exchange information through the forum on our website, and thus help each other raise healthier Monarchs... and other butterflies too.

If you've printed this out and read it... why not pass this to a friend, put it on the community noticeboard, give it to a school...

The Butterfly Project

In late September/October workshops in many parts of NZ will be held to explain **The Butterfly Project**, (Butterfly Walks or Transects, and Tagging) and to distribute tags. With the generosity of National Geographic we have an excellent film ‘The Butterfly Code’, which shows tagging/migration in Taiwan/Japan.

We also have a visual presentation on identifying NZ’s butterflies, and will have available some of our items for sale, including Butterfly ID Charts (\$15 each). The workshops will be held here:

<u>September</u>			
Auckland	Monday 25th	Timaru	Friday 6th
New Plymouth	Tuesday 26th	Ashburton	Saturday 7th
Palmerston North	Wednesday 27th	Christchurch	Sunday 8th
Wellington,	Thursday 28th	Blenheim	Monday 9th
Nelson,	Friday 29th	Lower Hutt	Tuesday 10th
Hokitika	Saturday 30th	Napier	Wednesday 11th
<u>October</u>		Gisborne	Thursday 12th
Queenstown	Tuesday 3rd	Tauranga	Friday 13th
Invercargill	Wednesday 4th	Hamilton	Saturday 14th
Dunedin	Thursday 5th	Auckland	Sunday 15th
		Northland venues	- <i>late October</i>

More details, as we book venues and finalise times, will be on our website and in your local newspaper. If you are unable to travel to the nearest venue, and feel there would be sufficient interest for a workshop where you live, please contact Jacqui.

Just Gardening & Eilerslie International Flower Show

This is at the Botanic Gardens at Manukau City, Auckland, from 15-19 November. With all the work being put into our exhibit, we’re going to win a medal!

We have 20 tickets available now at a discounted price (\$23 each, instead of \$37 at the gate) by sending us (MBNZT) your payment before 7 October, first come, first served basis. We encourage you to come and see the show, and introduce yourselves – and if you would like to work on the stand for a few hours, you get in free! Contact Jacqui for more information at the address above.

On Saturday, 23 September we will have a display at the Kumeu Showgrounds as part of ‘Just Gardening’. Look for us in the Society Hall, site SH13.

Have you registered for **The Butterfly Project** yet?
Please click on the mauve button on the website
www.monarch.org.nz