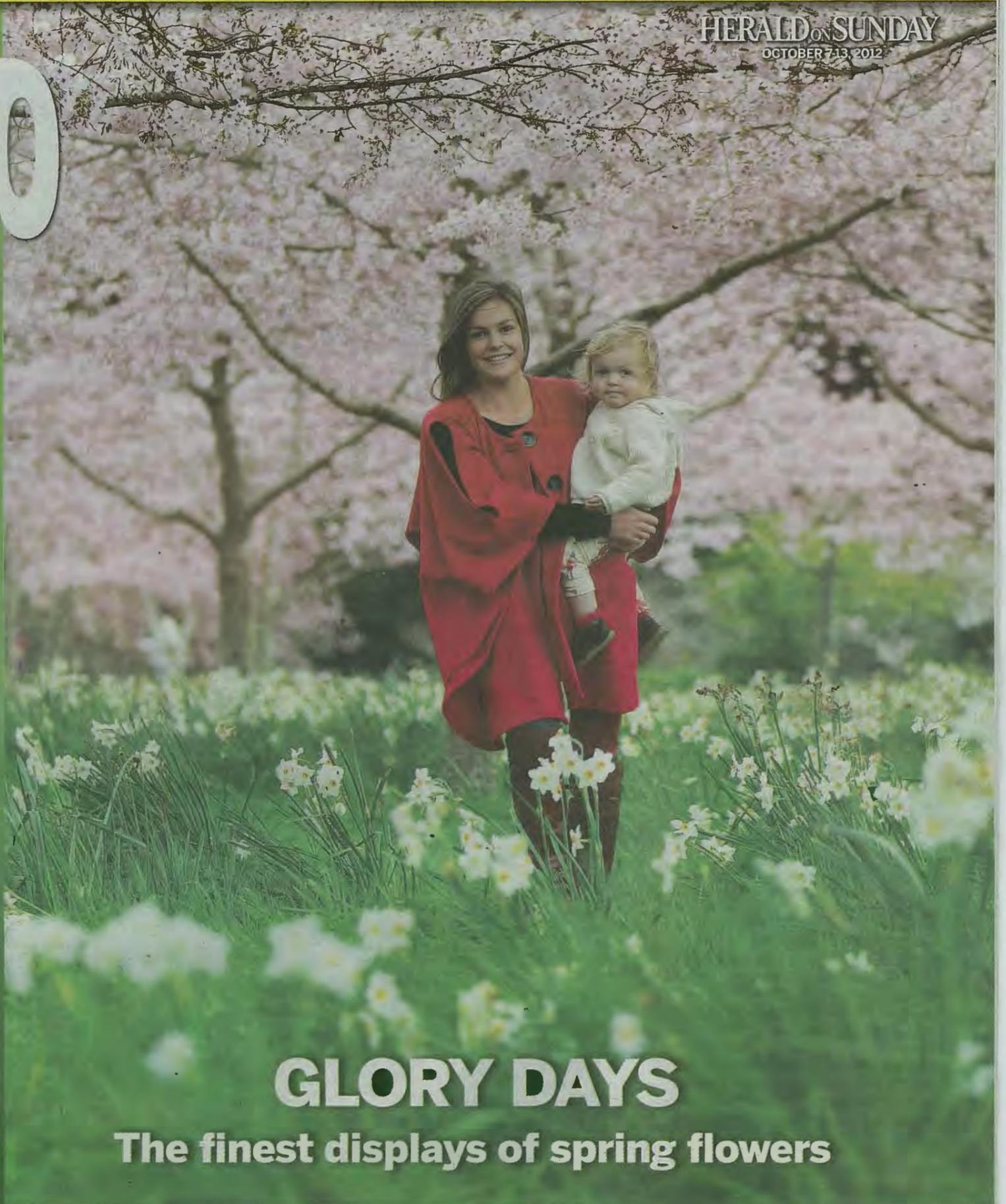


Kiwis

HOMES
Rural views, p21



GLORY DAYS

The finest displays of spring flowers

Get 2 days FREE off a 8+ day rental.*

You're welcome.

Enjoy travelling through New Zealand this Spring with this and other fantastic offers. It doesn't matter how long your trip is, we've got something special for you. Visit avis.co.nz and quote TPNA027 when booking.

*Offer is valid for bookings made between 27 August 2012 and 24 October 2012 with travel up until 19 December 2012. Coupon number TPNA027 must be quoted at the time of booking. Free days applies to time & kilometer charges only. Subject to availability. Further conditions apply. Visit avis.co.nz or call 0800 655 111 for full details.



AVIS

We try harder.

PROUD PARTNER OF



PROUDLY SUPPORTING



1/12/12 10:00 AM

Flower power

Whether you're inland or on the coast, in the city or the country, **Danielle Wright** discovers there are spring flowers in bloom all around us.

Every season has its charms, but spring is perhaps the most beautiful when it comes to flowers. It gives us the perfect excuse to slow down and appreciate them because, as Hans Christian Andersen once wrote, "Just living is not enough. One must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower". Here's where to view the most beautiful blossoms this spring:



Colourful poppies at Kuirau Park. STEPHEN PARKER

Into the wild

Wildflowers are not found in the same numbers on the side of motorways, but there are a few places where you can still spot them. Waikumete Cemetery on Great North Rd in Glen Eden has one of the best collections of wildflowers of South African origin in New Zealand (gates open at 7.30am).

The Waipu Coastal Trail also offers a variety of wildflowers to walk through on your way past the beautiful shoreline.

Further afield, stroll through Rotorua's Government Gardens and Kuirau Park for spring blooms such as pansies, polyanthus, primula, myosotis and antirrhinum. Around 40,000 tulips are planted through Rotorua's CBD, and they're at their peak now.

Northland's Waitangi Treaty Grounds' heritage gardens, surrounding one of New Zealand's oldest and most visited historic homes, are particularly stunning in spring.

The Kerikeri Basin has English gardens with blossoming fruit trees that were planted in the mid- to late-1800s, right outside the Stone Store and Kemp House. The oldest pear tree is planted just across the road next to the car park at The Pear Tree Restaurant and Bar.

A well-kept local secret, Rolands Wood, is a little piece of English woodland only a few minutes' drive from the Kerikeri CBD, bequeathed to the community by Roland Sanson, who wanted to create a woodland with bluebells and daffodils under the trees, just as he'd seen on visits to England.



Roses are colourful at Hamilton Gardens. ALAN GIBSON

A walk in the park

Public gardens all have spring flowers in bloom. Try the Auckland Botanic Gardens in Manurewa (www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz) for forsythia, viburnum and rhododendrons, plus late-flowering magnolias.



The book *Wildflowers of New Zealand* by Rob Suisted (New Holland, RRP \$19.99) is a good companion to your flower-spotting. It is sectioned into Coasts, Open Country, Wetlands, Forests and Alpine Zones so you can enjoy the flowers of New Zealand wherever you may be. We have 5 copies to give away. To enter the draw, visit www.winwithheraldonsunday.co.nz and enter the keyword "WILDFLOWERS" along with your details. Entries close at 11.59pm on Wednesday October 10.



Catherine Clarke and Luca Le Fleming-Burrow enjoy spring blooms at Auckland Botanic Gardens. DOUG SHERRING



Flowers in bloom at Eden Garden include, from left, rhododendrons, clivia, bluebells, magnolias and irises.

They have a Spring Blossom Valley where you can see many different flowering plants and listen to tui enjoying the blossoms. An African garden features watsonia, protea and leucadendron. Free entry and open daily.

Cornwall Park (www.cornwallpark.co.nz) is renowned for its cherry blossoms, producing a beautiful display of flowers for a month in spring. The trees are just starting to blossom and are located near the main car park, off Pohutakawa Drive. Today is Cherry Blossom Sunday at Cornwall Park, when families are encouraged to pack a picnic and enjoy entertainment, including music, face-painting, fairies and elves from 1pm-3pm. A Japanese cultural day, Sakura Matsuri, will take place in the park next Sunday, October 14, from 10am-3pm.

For a clash of colour just 10 minutes from the CBD, Eden Garden (www.edengarden.co.nz) is open every day except Christmas from 9am-4.30pm. Eden

Garden manager Karen Lowther says irises, bluebells, rhododendrons, clivia and magnolias are currently in bloom. "Some of the magnolias are around 30 years old," says Karen. "We have just about every variety: white, pink, cerise, even a dark, blood-red variety called genie."

Further afield, Hamilton Gardens (www.hamiltongardens.co.nz) has internationally themed gardens such as the Italian Renaissance Garden, English Flower Garden, Chinese Scholars Garden, Japanese Garden of Contemplation, American Modernist Garden and Indian Char Bagh Garden.

Private gardens

Woodbridge Gardens in Coatesville (www.woodbridgegardens.co.nz), open by appointment, is the brainchild of Christine and Tony Peek.

"It's lovely at the moment," says Christine. "All the trees have new leaves, wisterias are flowering, a bluebell wood is in its prime, magnolias are flowering and we have a display of pink *Malus floribunda* trees



Wisteria droops elegantly in Woodbridge Gardens.



Wildflowers abound in the Waitangi Treaty House grounds.

NORTHERN ADVOCATE



Eden Garden is a riot of spring colour.

DOUG SHERRING



The tulips at Government Gardens in Rotorua.

STEPHEN RUSSELL



(crabapples), as well as ducklings on the pond and lambs frolicking around in our adjacent paddocks." Christine admits her favourite seasons are spring and autumn.

There are also blossom trees in bright pink and white, as well as bluebells underneath silver birch trees.

"It's a passion," says Christine. "I absolutely love plants and gardens, they keep me young. I'm 70, but feel 40. Everyone needs a passion in life."

Ayrlies Garden in Whitford, the fruition of five decades of hard work, (www.ayrlies.co.nz) is also highly recommended. Beverley McConnell was inspired by her father's inscription in a gardening book, a Rudyard Kipling quote that read: "Gardens are not made by saying 'Oh how beautiful' and sitting in the shade". She created a slice of paradise now commemorated in its own book, simply called *Ayrlies*.

Ayrlies is open throughout the year, during the week by appointment, to people aged over 12.

In Te Awamutu, take a tour of Alpha Lavenders' farm (www.alphalavenders.com), where you can see

"Wisterias are flowering, a bluebell wood is in its prime and magnolias are flowering."

the plants in full bloom from early next month to the end of January. You can also learn about the range of products made from lavender, including oil, water and soap.

Sarnia Park in Cambridge (www.sarniapark.co.nz) has cherry trees lining both sides of a Cherry Blossom lawn, at their best now. Tulips in their rose garden are also due to flower this month.

To find more gardens in your area, visit the New Zealand Gardens Trust (www.gardens.org.nz), Friars' Gardens of New Zealand (www.friarsgardens.co.nz) or Gardens to Visit (www.gardenstovisit.co.nz).

Seasonal blooms

"Mid-spring sees delphiniums, poppies and viburnum snowballs available and all are gorgeous in their own right," says Sarah Scott, owner of Wallflower Boutique Florist (www.wallflower.net.nz). "Poppies tend to come in bunches of mixed colours. They don't need much arranging, just pop them into a vintage jar or small vase, sit back and watch them open up with their lovely

crushed-look petals that look a bit like ballerina skirts."

Her advice for spring blossom branches is to put them inside a tall vase so they don't drop their petals.

Late spring arrives next month and heralds the start of the much-anticipated peony season. Scott recommends putting these romantic blooms in shabby chic teacups or modern glass jugs. The colours range from bridal white through to deep creams, as well as a range of pinks, corals and deep red.

If all this is making you want to become better-acquainted with flowers, try some of the flower arranging courses around town. Vida Flores in Newmarket runs hobby classes on Tuesdays from 6pm-8pm or Thursdays from 10am-12pm. Most classes are \$125 and range from hand-tied bouquets to table centrepieces. On November 8 there's a class with a Christmas theme to teach how to decorate with flowers for the summer festive season. There's also a one-on-one class (\$250). A flower market held here on Wednesdays will inspire further, see www.vidaflores.co.nz.