

Al Ru Farm History

Alan and Ruth bought the 125-acre farm in 1979 as a weekender for their small herd of stud cattle, soon moving permanently with their four children, Robyn, Lechelle, Pixie & Cromwell, Ruth's mother, and a lively retriever, Rupert. Once a simple sheep property with just a few Desert Ash for shade, the homestead remained modest while the garden flourished. Frequent nursery visits and rose orders soon transformed the landscape, which has since grown into 10 acres of ever-evolving plantings, shaped by both successes and experiments along the way.



Early Spring

Early spring at Al Ru bursts with colour, pink *Silene*, lime-green *Euphorbia*, *Argyranthemum*, and *Centranthus* bulbs lighting up the lawns around the rose garden. *Prunus*, flowering pears, and crab apples add to the seasonal show, while loose hedges of *Roldana* delight with their soft lime leaves and bright yellow blooms.

The Rose Garden

During the 2020 lockdowns, the *Prunus* trees behind the statues were removed and the arbours rebuilt, opening the space for new pink plantings. While the openness is striking, bronze-leaf *Coprosma* hedges have since been added to create a sense of enclosure and formality.

The Woodland

Brimming with *Helleborus*, *Aquilegia*, Bluebells, *Geranium*, *Angelicas* and later two varieties of *Anthopodium cirratum*, Te Puna 40cm flowering first, followed by Matapouri Bay 60cm flowering straight afterwards.

The Meadow Garden

Complementing the white theme of *Bellis perennis* and *Iris x hollandica* flowering in October, we have extended the season by planting white *Lilium longiflorum*, allowing the white-flowering *Anemone hupehensis* to bloom in December and into the autumn.

The Lily Pond

This garden is populated with various shades of pink during Spring & Summer. Firstly, double-flowering pink *Helleborus* close to the pond and various varieties of *Liliums* flowering from November. Following on, powder puff pink *Sedum spectabilis* edge the lawn with pale pink *Crinum moorei* lilies and perfumes the air. To break up the pink, blue and white *Plectranthus ecklonii* just makes this garden pop with radiance and colour. During the Autumn months, the crowning jewel of the lily pond starts to bloom, with pink-flowering Japanese *Anemone hupensis* standing tall and stately above the green foliage.

The Silver Border

The length of the main access path from the far end of the carpark to the garden brims with Dutch *Iris Hollandica* 'Angel's Wings'. They were Ruth's favourite in early spring, followed by *Euphorbia*, *Echinops*, *Eryngium* and *Salvia nemorosa* Caradonna later in the season. These beds shimmer with silvers, greys, purples and blues right through the year

