

A Guide for Herb Societies

hosting the

Herb Federation of New Zealand

Biennial Conference

and

Annual General Meeting

Introduction

The Biennial Conference of the Herb Federation of New Zealand is the premier event in the Federation's calendar. It provides a valuable opportunity for members, to renew long held friendships, make new ones, and to gain valuable information by attending workshops, seminars and lectures.

Herb Federation of New Zealand Conferences are generally hosted on behalf of the Federation, by one or more [a consortium] of local Herb Societies. The local Herb Society [or Societies] accept responsibility for managing and arranging all aspects of the Conference, together with the Annual General Meeting of the Federation normally held during the Conference.

A well organised and run Conference is a showcase for both the Herb Federation of New Zealand, and the host Herb Society, and an opportunity for both to profit from a successful conference.

The Herb Federation of New Zealand makes available to the hosting Herb Society a loan (if needed) of \$2,000 to meet expenses that are incurred, prior to the receipt of registration subscriptions from intending participants. This loan is to be paid back to the Herb Federation of New Zealand, and any nett profit made by the Conference, is shared equally by the Herb Federation of New Zealand and the host Herb Society.

Should the Conference operate at a loss due to unforeseen circumstances, the Herb Federation of New Zealand, may, at the absolute discretion of the Federation Executive, having received full explanation and account of such loss; to the extent that the Federation Executive consider appropriate, subsidise such loss.

Consult the Constitution, the rules and By-Laws to ensure what you propose falls within the requirements. Consult the Executive of the Herb Federation, through the Secretariat, should you have any doubt that your proposals are appropriate for the Herb Federation of New Zealand Biennial Conference.

Herb Federation Executive: Responsibilities for Conference

(Ensure you communicate with **Executive of the HFNZ** on these matters)

1. Anything to do with the AGM, including including an agreeable time for the AGM, and an appropriate venue to hold the AGM.
2. The Secretariat of the Herb Federation will distribute:
 - a. the required notice of the AGM
 - b. the Agenda for the AGM
 - c. minutes of the last AGM
 - d. all reports to be presented to the AGM
 - e. details of any remits received
 - f. nominations for election
 - g. Herb Federation Accounts and Balance Sheet in accordance with the Constitution.

The Conference Treasurer's duties;

1. Opening a bank account with the conference loan from the executive. A numbered account on the Society existing account is the most straight forward option.
2. Preparing and keeping an accurate Receipts and Payments Ledger, with itemised columns to cover each part of conference.
3. Obtaining and keep invoices for all monies spent.
4. Keeping a duplicate receipts book for all monies received.
5. Checking bank statements with ledgers and bank with ledgers and cheque butts.

6. Keep careful control of expenditure by regularly checking actual receipts and expenditure against budget figures.
7. Refunding all cancellations in accordance with the procedures approved by the Executive of the Herb Federation.
8. After conference, when ~~last~~ all outstanding accounts have been paid, prepare a statement of the accounts for audit and once audited send with cheque of half the credit balance, plus the original loan, and any monies advanced on loan, to the HFNZ Treasurer.
9. Accounts have to be completed, audited and presented to the Federation within six weeks of the Conference concluding.

Please note, “audit” means a “Review Assignment” as defined by the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Preparing the Conference Budget

Important Note: Though it is prudent to budget for a small surplus in calculating registration fee, aim to keep fees as low as possible to encourage attendance.

Consult the conference attendee register from the previous conference for probable numbers

Registration Fees will need to take into account all the following:

Registration Fees

There should be a discount for Individual Members of the Herb Federation and also for those that are coming from overseas, e.g. Australia or Japan.

It is also a good idea to allow a discount for early registration, to encourage attendee's to **commit** early, rather than leaving it to the last minute.

Catering arrangements

Friday evening meal

Friday supper (local societies invited to contribute “plates” will reduce cost.)

Saturday and Sunday lunches

Saturday and Sunday morning and afternoon teas

Saturday night meal, optional and charged for separately, partners not otherwise attending the Conference will attend the Saturday night meal - menus – complimentary drink, serviettes, table decorations

Day Registrations

Day Registrations, well publicised locally are a great way to introduce the general public to your Local Society and to the Federation. Make it clear what is included in the Day Registration, presumably morning and afternoon tea and lunch. The Day Registration Fee should not make it more attractive for attendees to register for the day, rather than the full Conference.

Local Travel, Sightseeing

Advise attendees the opportunities for local travel – to and from airport, bus depot etc., sightseeing. It is a good idea to send brochures from the local I-site information centre when acknowledging their registration, if by email you could include the internet URL for the information centre.

Arranging and providing bus transport to and from the airport, could be high risk, unless you are certain that enough people will arrive on flights within a short time frame to make it worthwhile. Often Hotels and Motels provide free courtesy mini buses.

Include any guest speaker travel costs and workshop tutor travel, unless workshops are to be charged as a separate item on the registration form. A separate charge for a workshop should be the exception and limited to very special cases.

Do not include the Monday garden visits/trips in the registration calculations. It is optional so charged separately.

Extras

1. Hall hire, cleaning, heating.
2. Hire of any audio visual equipment [many speakers now require a data projector], trestle tables, urns, cooking elements etc. Check with the conference centre. They may be able to provide these at minimal cost.
3. Photocopying, postage, stationary, notices and signs.
4. Attendee bags and suitable contents.
5. Conference logo badges.
6. Floral decorations
7. Flowers, fruit, petrol vouchers for guests, speakers, tutors. Consult Executive before budgeting for any gifts for them as they may prefer a simple, sincere, thank-you.
8. First aid supplies and any other incidentals.
9. Identity name tags. If on a lanyard, either use a name tag with two attachment points so that they do not flip over. A cheaper solution is to print on both sides of the name tag.

Accommodation arrangements

Motel/hotel/hostel/private billeting

N.B. Arrange suitable meeting space for both Executive and Conference Committee to allow each to meet as necessary. Conference committee will need to meet just before conference opens to ensure ALL contingencies have been covered.

It is a good idea to give information regarding the range of accommodation available conveniently located. If accommodation is available at the Conference Venue, they may be willing to hold a certain number of rooms until a close off date. If registrants have not firmly booked a room by the close off date, the rooms are released for letting to the general public. Make this cut off date clear in the Conference Brochure and it is the Registrants responsibility to book before that date. The Conference Committee should not get involved in prepaying accommodation deposits.

Remember there are always locals who prefer to live out and some may like to host out-of-town conference visitors. You could include a response in the Registration Form for people to indicate they would like to be billeted, if sufficient locals are offering to take billets.

Hostel accommodation: schools, universities, church camps, backpackers etc. A deposit is usually required quite early. If the conference loan has not been received at the time ask the Executive to make an advance to cover this. You need to be really confident that sufficient attendee's will use the accommodation before you outlay conference money on accommodation putting it at risk of forfeiture if insufficient numbers book YOUR chosen accommodation.

Motel/Hotel accommodation

Include the necessary information regarding deposits on the registration form and remind those using accommodation that they will be responsible for paying the balance to the management before leaving. The cost of breakfasts would be a personal responsibility unless provided by the host club and charged for on the registration form accordingly.

Billeting

You might like to suggest a suitable daily charge.

Countdown to the Conference

(The following time-lines are a guide only, and generally earlier is better than later.)

Guidelines:

After confirming the appointment of a convener, secretary, treasurer, committee, divide all responsibilities between committee members, ensuring that there is a **clear division of duties as well as the necessary liaison between members.**

Make certain that ALL understand that they cannot commit the Conference Committee to expenditure without the specific agreement of the Conference Committee.

A committee member may need to form a subcommittee from society members to work on the allocated task e.g. bag making, making goodies to fill bags etc.

Suggested responsibilities:

Publicity, Venue and Catering, Accommodation, Registrations (person with computer and email facilities), Guest speakers, Workshops, Transport, Garden visits and trip organizers, Bag makers, Makers of Goodies for Bags, Badge organizer, Stall holder contact and organizer, Special gifts, Attendee gifts in rooms, Floral arrangements, Furniture, Audio visual, Raffle, Conference “Mum”, Hostesses, First Aid and Emergency.

18 months prior (or sooner)

Consult attendance register, registration form, programme etc. from previous conferences.

Book Conference Venue suitable for anticipated numbers, also halls/rooms/space for workshops, speakers, stalls, displays. Inquire about deposits. When/how much.

Arrange suitable accommodation (live in at site of venue is the most attractive option but not essential) and ascertain approximate cost.

Arrange catering for all meals, including morning and afternoon teas. Saturday special dinner, ascertain cost of suitable menus. Are deposits required? When?

Discuss conference logo, suitable for advertising, badges, stationary, appropriate to your area.

Decide whether you want to open stalls to the public at any stage, invite the media?

Submit a detailed preliminary budget to the Treasurer of the Herb Federation for approval.

Subject to approval of the Conference budget, apply to the HFNZ for the Conference Loan, usually (\$2,000).

Ensure that you have an up to date list of all Societies with addresses.

Liaise with HFNZ Executive and send publicity for the HFNZ Newsletter, and the HFNZ website.

Brainstorm ideas for speakers, workshop tutors, stalls, entertainment, Monday garden visits, any other trips.

12 – 10 months

Draft the Conference Programme and Timetable from Registration Opening to the Finale, and submit to HFNZ Executive for discussion.

Firm up on Conference Budget and get written quotations (not estimates) from catering firms, accommodation venues etc. and make clear arrangements with speakers, workshop hosts, etc. regarding their costs, including their accommodation and travelling costs, if these are to be met from Conference revenues. Submit revised budgets to the Treasurer of the Herb Federation for approval.

Send publicity for HFNZ newsletter (Herb News), and for posting on the website. It is advantageous to publicise the Conference as widely as possible at minimal cost, and time on the website increases the likelihood of “hits” increasing exposure.

Approach suitable speakers, workshop tutors, garden owners for their interest, availability, costs.

Travel the proposed garden visit routes to ascertain suitability then ask bus companies for quotes.

Send finalised programme to HFNZ Executive and progress report for HFNZ Newsletter (herbnews) and the website.

10 – 8 months

Final decision on Conference Logo if not already made.

Firm decision on venue, menu, entertainment/after dinner speaker for Saturday night.

Make definite decision on other speakers, workshop tutors, garden visits.

Send all speakers, tutors, garden owner’s formal invitations with details of date, time, what you require. Select some “extras” to cover unforeseen circumstances!

Book transport for Monday garden visits.

Fine tune programme (final times, speakers, workshops, bus trips detail) as far as possible in readiness for assembling registration form.

Ask all presenters/gardens to visit etc. to write a short profile/description of their garden, to be included in herbnews and put on the website.

8 – 4 months

Arrange to either open a P O Box if your Society does not have one, or for Counter Mail collection at your local Post Shop. This prevents mail going astray from a private letter box. Remember you will be expecting a lot of large cheques from all over NZ and around the world.

Print Registration Forms. Include a tick box on the Registration Form granting permission for registrants names and contact details to be included on a list of registrants to be distributed at the Conference. Attendee's often wish to continue friendships created at the conference and their contact details promotes this.

Give an early date for receipt of registration monies, (this provides a useful guide to numbers attending) a cut off date for final full payment, and a last day for cancellation refund. Refunds should exclude registration monies received.

Remember to include your Herb Society's name and the Box number for Counter Mail return address on the tear-off return section.

Appoint ONE person to collect mail and pass on to committee member processing registrations.

The committee member receiving and processing registrations needs to compile lists covering names, addresses, phone, date received, monies received, monies owed, local arrival/departure travel requirements, special needs, accommodation, meals, partners for Saturday meal, workshop preferences, garden/bus trip preferences, any extra accommodation required etc. (easy on a computer) and pass on the information to the appropriate committee member.

Important Note:

Record all details for each attendee on hard copy form.

Construct a master sheet, print, and fill one sheet for each registration as it arrives. File, along with the registration return slip and all related correspondence, in a large alphabetical ring folder which must be kept easily accessible for quick reference by anyone during the conference. This is a must in case of emergency.

Send registration forms to HFNZ to be sent out with HFNZ Newsletter (herbnews) and to post on the Federation Web site

Send 3 – 4 copies of the registration form to all Herb Societies (not all Herb Societies belong to the HFNZ) and interested parties such as herb growers, research institutes, Natural medicines colleges, Botanic Gardens etc.

12 – 6 weeks

Check all arrangements and all costs regarding accommodation, catering, garden visits and bus trips, Saturday night arrangements.

Write to remind/thank/confirm arrangements, dates, times, equipment, local travel requirements with all speakers, tutors, stall holders, garden owners and ask each to please send a short profile.

Check with presenters any special requirements they might have, e.g. data projector, white board etc.

Ask presenters to prepare notes for their Workshop, Seminar or Session and give these to the Committee in electronic format before the conclusion of the Conference, for publication and distribution to those that request them. Take a list of those people at the Conference that want to receive a copy of the notes. Establish a charge for the notes and collect the money at the conference. It is cheaper to produce and distribute the notes on DVD than to print and post hard copy. Another advantage of DVD is that, if photographs are available they can be included without additional cost.

Print name tags (this may be too early to print the name tags, and there is benefit in leaving this detail until most of the registrations are in), including the area the person comes from. Add any details you think needed for ease of administration. It is common for the name tags to be different colours, designating speakers etc. You need to be prepared to print additional name tags right up to commencement of the Conference, for late registrants, and also perhaps walk in day registrants.

Print Saturday dinner place mats, finalize discussions on any extras such as drinks.

Check on badges and arrange collection date.

Keep a watch on your budget!

Send publicity through to HFNZ. Time to seek media coverage if wished.

6 – 2 weeks

Receive profiles from speakers, tutors, and garden owners with garden descriptions.

Use these to compile and print and information booklet/sheets for attendees bags.

Brief “House Keeping” notes, such as phone, address, doctor, emergency procedures, church services, local bus stop, washing facilities, reminders to pay motels etc.

Lists of workshop and garden/bus participants. A list of attendees and addresses.

Interesting news snippets – keep it brief.

Check all committee are up to date with their tasks. Is publicity working?

Last two weeks

Check budget carefully. Make necessary adjustments. Finalize all arrangements.

Reconfirm with Workshop and other presenters to ensure they are on track to come to Conference. It is a good idea to have a contingency plan, as you never know what might stop someone coming to Conference at the last minute.

Compile a countdown timetable for all conference activities, itemizing all individual and group responsibilities, and all equipment.

Call a meeting of all involved and go through, **check**, ensure nothing has been missed out and that **everyone understands** their role and what is required of them.

Make sure the “furniture crew” know what goes where and when!

Make sure there is someone appointed to **introduce** each speaker, tutor, garden owner, and someone to **thank** each and where necessary make a presentation.

Fill the “goodie” bags and attach the empty name tags. The printed name tags can be inserted at the time participants register.

Unless name tags are on lanyards that do not allow them to flip over (two lanyard connection points), they should be printed both sides. It is frustrating to meet someone whom you should know, and all you can see on their name tag is a great big blank.

When printing name tags, be very conscious of the fact that many have some eyesight impairment. Select a suitably large and clear typeface, particularly for their first name.

Name tags should include the area the attendee is from.

The name tags can include information (in code) indicating those that have paid for the Saturday night dinner, and if wished, the workshops attendees have registered for.

Recheck the location of all Conference venues, print “Google Maps” for each, and if using bus transport, ensure that there is ample maneuvering and parking space for the bus. Be aware that some may have arrived at the venue by car first, and taken up some of the maneuvering and parking space.

If any of the Workshops involve cooking demonstrations be aware that the venue will have rules regarding first aid firefighting and may require you to have a fire extinguisher and/or a fire blanket on hand.

Friday of Conference

Arrange registration and reception area. Remember the Executive will want a table.

Upon registration give attendee's their identity tag and "goodie bag", and preferably a cup of tea/coffee and something to eat, as it may have been some hours (on the Friday) since they had something to eat as they may have been traveling. The "goodie bag" should contain good maps showing the location of all conference venues, including bus trips, where relevant. Good detailed maps can be printed from Google Maps, for example.

Delegate some of your members to welcome people as they arrive at the Conference Venue. Remember that many have traveled some distance and may be feeling out of their comfort zone.

Set up stall holder area and conference hall. It is a good idea to have the morning and afternoon teas at least, and lunch also if possible, in the stalls area, as this gives time for attendee's to browse the stalls. If the stalls are in a separate area, even if adjacent, the stalls do not receive sufficient attention to warrant the investment the stallholders have made. Some may have traveled significant distances and may be providing your Conference, your Society, or the Federation with financial sponsorship support.

Check on workshop rooms and equipment.

See to floral arrangements.

Distribute any gifts, food, notices to attendee's rooms.

"Conference Mum" and the hostesses ready to escort attendees to their rooms.

Have a cup of tea ready to offer folk as they arrive, some have traveled long distances and it is a good icebreaker.

During Conference

Man the registration table at all times for inquiries, emergencies, safety purposes.

Be sure to make clear announcements at the beginning of any session regarding any safety issues, the location of toilets, exits etc. and any changes to the programme or venues. Important messages should be repeated at other times, as not everyone might have been present, or have fully comprehended the message the first time.

Have a hostess always on hand to greet and organize speakers, tutors, stall holders.

Make sure committee members always wear some form of conspicuous identification – ribbon, sash, badge, hat etc. so that they can be found quickly if needed by anyone.

Make sure that the bus driver has a clear map with the relevant Conference or garden visit venue clearly marked.

Delegate someone to travel to all Conference and garden visit venues a little in advance so that they can direct any cars and the bus as it arrives.

After Conference

Hand over Conference Register and banner to the Society elected to host the next biennial conference, or to the HFNZ Executive if no Society has been decided upon.

Prepare notes from the workshops and talks for distribution to attendees and send to Executive to distribute with the next future Newsletters. If there are the facilities at the venue it may be possible to copy and distribute these notes during the Conference.

Send an electronic copy of the notes to the webmaster for inclusion of selected portions on the website.

Remaining badges, souvenir teaspoons, booklets etc. prepared especially for sale at conference, using Conference monies should be handed over to the HFNZ Executive.

The Treasurer, after ensuring that all financial commitments have been met, must prepare the Conference accounts for audit. Once audited these should be sent to the Executive within six weeks from end of conference along with the \$2,000 Conference Loan, and half of any profit made by the Conference. Remember that the Conference is the Herb Federation of New Zealand conference, and without the involvement of the Herb Federation, there probably would not have been a conference. If the Conference is run at a loss, the loan from the HFNZ is to repaid in full and the loss borne by the hosting Herb Society.

Should the Conference operate at a loss due to unforeseen circumstances, the Herb Federation of New Zealand, may, at the absolute discretion of the Federation Executive, having received full explanation and account of such loss; to the extent that the Federation Executive consider appropriate, subsidise such loss.

Write thank you letters to speakers, tutors, garden owners etc. - especially important if their services were given free of charge.

Where possible look for people from your own area as speakers and tutors. There is usually a wealth of exciting things going on out there. Take time to seek them out. Offer these people the opportunity to advertise their products/enterprise by way of a free stall at your Conference in exchange for speaking, running a workshop.

It will not be necessary to charge attendees for workshops, and your area is “put on the map”.

Try to have one or two well known and admired speakers as a draw card and incorporate their fees in the Registration Fee.

Send a final Conference Report to HFNZ for the Newsletter.

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