

IPPS Japanese Exchange[©]

Alice Buschl

Nelmac Ltd., 8 Vickerman Street, P.O. Box 5077, Nelson 7010, New Zealand

Email: aliceb@nelmac.co.nz

I haven't been overseas before, so to find out that I had been chosen to visit Japan on an exchange trip was an exciting chance of a lifetime. I left Nelson on Sunday 5 Oct., flying to Auckland then to Hong Kong before arriving in Narita, Japan. I was met by Mr. Ishii, a member of IPPS Japan; we travelled from Narita through Shinagawa to Nagoya. There I was met by Mr. Uchida and we drove to his farm in Suzuka, where I stayed for 3 days. I worked on his strawberry farm, deleafing, weeding, and planting strawberries ready for Christmas harvest. Mr. Uchida grows strawberries two ways; the traditional way in the ground inside greenhouses, and the more modern way in raised polystyrene troughs also inside a greenhouse. I left Suzuka on Wednesday and travelled to Tsu where I met Mr. Fujimora from Akatsuka group. The next day I travelled to Makuhari Messe to visit the International Flower Expo (IFEX), what a huge expo! It took a whole day to walk around, with stalls ranging from cut flowers and nursery plants to horticultural products, tools, water purifying systems, irrigation, and machinery. The following day, Friday, I was met by Mrs. Mizutani who took me to Tokyo by train for 2 days of sightseeing. It was amazing, so many people, such a busy place and stunning at night with all the buildings lit up. I was then driven to meet Mr. Suzuki where I worked on his herb farm, The Power of Herb, for 2 days. I worked with a great group of ladies trimming, tidying and pricking out a range of herbs into small pots. The Power of Herb grows an extensive range of herbs for medicinal uses and also common herbs for everyday kitchen use. The whole operation is in a glasshouse and very much automated in the way of spraying, feeding, and watering. All benches are stainless steel and the floor is all weed matted, meaning virtually no weeds at all. During this time a typhoon passed through the area with heavy rain and high winds. I left Hamamatsu on Thursday 17 Oct. and travelled to Gifu where Mr. Onishi picked me up and we visited his business, Central Rose Company, the largest potted mini rose company in Japan. I worked for Central Rose packing roses for market. The roses are all gift wrapped, with a portion wrapped "Halloween Style." Central Rose Company produce 2 million immaculate roses per year in a very efficient operation. The team of propagators produce 50,000 cuttings daily which are then watered and covered with plastic for 2 weeks. After this time 90% of cuttings have taken root. All roses are produced in temperature controlled glasshouses, cooled during the summer days and heated during the winter nights. On Saturday the IPPS Japan Region's Conference began, with seminars during the day and a formal dinner and auction in the evening. Sunday was a day of field trips to cut flower growers — *Gerbera* and roses, then off to a hydroponic lettuce farm, Central Rose Company, hot house tomato growers, and finally back to the train station where I travelled with Mrs. Mizutani to Kyoto. We had 2 days in and around Kyoto and Nara visiting temples, shrines and my favourite, The Golden Temple. On Tuesday 22 Oct. Mrs. Mizutani and I travelled from Kyoto back to Nagoya by train to the airport. It was a full-on 2 weeks, extremely enjoyable and an experience of a life time in such a beautiful country with so much history. I feel honoured that I was chosen to represent New Zealand IPPS in Japan, and am thankful to those who supported and encouraged me in New Zealand and to my wonderful hosts in Japan.

