

2017 Young Horticulturist of the Year winning speech

Tim Adams¹



Tim Adams delivering his winning speech.

Tim was winner of the Best Speech Award for this speech presented at the grand final of the 2017 Young Horticulturist of the Year competition held 15–16th November at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Grand Millennium Hotel, Auckland.

The topic for the speech was:

Horticulture – He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

Throughout the development of human history, there has been an intrinsic link between people and horticulture. Our historical reliance on horticulture for food has led to the development of human civilisation, and in turn human civilisation has led to the further development of horticultural practice.

This relationship is exemplified in the Māori proverb: “Te toto o te tangata, he kai; te oranga o te tangata, he whenua.” Meaning: “The blood of man is food; hence the life of man is land.”

Simply put, horticulture and people have sustained and shaped each other and, without horticulture, human life as we know it today would not exist.

However, in the last hundred years this relationship has evolved and changed.

Today, horticulture continues to sustain human civilisation, but has developed



Tim Adams being presented with the Best Speech Award by Stephen Sexton, Merchandise Manager, Countdown Supermarkets.

from an activity where the community worked the land for the collective good to instead being a task delegated to a small proportion of specialised people we call horticulturists.

Through this change, different industries have been established, each focusing on growing something different.

In New Zealand the most important and humble of these are viticulturists who, alongside winemakers, strive to produce a product that will maintain national mental health and encourage pregnancy rates.

As a viticulturist I can testify to the importance of having a team of great people to grow great grapes. This is undeniable and is a common theme across all horticulture.

However, what I think most important is being mindful of how the horticultural practices of today affect the people of tomorrow.

In Māoridom this mindfulness is represented in the traditional system of environmental stewardship called kaitiakitanga, where kaitiaki are people

recognised as guardians by the tangata whenua and held responsible for looking after something. By implementing kaitiakitanga today we, as horticulturists, can protect the natural environment for our descendants whilst also meeting the expectations and hopes of our forefathers.

This will not only guarantee that we are producing the best grape, garden, apple or kiwifruit now, but will also help ensure our children can continue to do so in this beautiful nation of Aotearoa-New Zealand that we call home.

So, is horticulture all about people? Put simply, yes horticulture, he tangata, it is the people. It is an industry formed by people for people and its continued success in New Zealand will always depend on passionate and focused individuals.

However, more than this, what is needed by horticulturists in New Zealand today is to collectively take on the mantle of kaitiaki, to guard, preserve and sustain the land we work to produce the crops we grow.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa, and thank you.

¹ Obsidian Vineyard, PO Box 33-141, Takapuna, Auckland 0740, New Zealand; tim@obsidian.co.nz