

Fellow of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (FRIH)

Elenka Antoinette Nikoloff



The RNZIH Education Trust nominated Elenka Nikoloff for the award of FRIH. This nomination was supported by the Auckland Branch of the RNZIH.

In 2004 the RNZIH Education Trust received seed funding from the then Horticulture Industry Training Organisation (HITO) to organise and manage an annual nation-wide Young Horticulturist of the Year competition. In January 2005 the Trust employed Elenka on a contractual basis to organise and manage the first competition to be held in November

2005. Elenka came to the Trust with a university degree in Horticulture along with experience in sales, marketing and other aspects of the widely diverse industry that is New Zealand horticulture. As chair of the Board of Trustees at that time, I believe none of us really knew what the challenge of setting up the competition and running it successfully would entail.

Elenka came on board and hit the ground running. An excerpt from the minutes of 7 February 2005 states:

“Elenka gave a presentation and update of where she was at with the competition. She tabled a budget showing that to run the competition would be in the vicinity of \$100,000. The main focus at the moment is to find sponsorship and has at present three possible sponsors that would like naming rights to the competition. Elenka also suggested putting the competition on a website and whether it was possible to get some television footage.”

Now, ten years later there is a Young Horticulturist of the Year website (www.younghort.co.nz), and some television footage has been achieved. However, a vast amount of work and effort has gone on behind the scenes during every one of those ten years and by far the major contributor to

getting this work done has been Elenka. She has worked tirelessly and with great passion in support of the aims of the competition, in seeking sponsorship and meeting the demands of sponsors, in liaising with horticulture industry sector groups, at promoting the competition, working with competitors in the months leading to the grand final, working with the many examiners and judges involved in various sector competition, and innumerable other challenges.

In carrying out this work in an efficient and professional manner, and with a passion for the young people involved in the competition, Elenka has assisted and promoted the aims of the RNZIH Education Trust, at the same time raised awareness of the work of the Institute in general, and made a significant contribution to the horticulture industry. The annual Young Horticulturist of the Year competition is now well and truly one of the highlights of the horticultural year.

The RNZIH Education Trust, supported by the Auckland Branch committee, is proud to have nominated Elenka Nikoloff for the award of Fellow of the RNZIH.

**Citation prepared by
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