

Award of Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (AHRIH) Neville Haydon

Neville Haydon is a camellia horticulturalist of true international standing, both through his breeding and cultural activities, his contribution of material and knowledge to camellia society members, and his participation in horticultural society matters at all levels (local, national, international and research).

- He has been the best camellia nurseryman in New Zealand over the last 25 years, and is highly respected as a camellia breeder and plantsman throughout the camellia world; and is held in high esteem by other knowledgeable plants-people in New Zealand.
- He is the introducer of significant camellia cultivars to New Zealand
- With Os Blumhardt, he has been the best camellia breeder in New Zealand over the past 20 years.
- He is the breeder of cultivars that are significant additions to the international camellia world.

- He is a member of the New Zealand Camellia Memorial Trust.
- He is a member and Treasurer for the International Camellia Society. He has and has attended many of its conferences presenting research papers.
- He is the Honorary Treasurer of both the RNZIH New Zealand Gardens Trust and the RNZIH Education Trust.
- He has been a gracious donor of plant material to the Auckland Branch of the NZ Camellia Society over perhaps 15 years donating \$50+ worth of camellias per monthly meeting for raffling. The monetary contribution to the Branch must have been well over \$5000. In addition, the material has been of top-of-range new cultivars, keeping members up-to-date. He has also donated large amounts of research material to the Camellia Memorial Trust over its 20 or so years. He has also donated significant numbers of rare species to the Auckland Botanic Gardens, to the point where the ABG collection of camellias is probably the most comprehensive in New Zealand.
- He has just completed the huge task of converting the International Camellia Register to digital form, plus the checking of many, many typos and errors. The final step to make it ready for CD distribution, in process now, will be to complete addition of new cultivars produced since the printed version was produced.
- In his breeding program, he has shown great originality in increasing the range of camellias available for garden use by moving away from the conventional pattern and species to produce brand new types. He has particularly put more value on plant form, so that instead of selecting a flower, he has produced a complete plant experience. Specific steps are selecting for leaf shape and

colour, plant size and form, flower character, floriferousness, season. He has brought into New Zealand some valuable species new to horticulture, and is using these to extend the range of garden material, particularly in producing very floriferous small-flowered types. He is starting the long path to producing flower blight resistant cultivars, and to introducing resistance to the breeding pool. Some outstanding cultivars that he has produced are as follows:

- ‘Baby Bear’ is a very slow growing with an extremely dense dwarf habit, outstanding as a miniature plant, ideally suited to increasing importance of small (town house) gardens.
- ‘Takanini’ is a deep red to black-red anemone-form flower with wide petaloids resembling narrow petals, and an overall metallic sheen, that is a top-notch garden plant, having an exceptionally long (6–8 months) flowering season, probably the longest of any camellia in New Zealand.
- ‘Purple Fire’ is a *Camellia pitardii* var. *pitardii* hybrid, of average height, dense structure and slow to medium growth rate, with a very long flowering season (early to late season). The flower is a bright, deep rose-purple colour and there is some veining of a deeper colour. The two features of distinction are its long season and unusual colour.
- ‘Transpink’ is a *Camellia transnokoensis* hybrid, with small, lanceolate leaves of dark green colour and with a rather matt surface, offsetting the flower colour to give a very attractive appearance. The plant is spreading, of dense structure and slow growth rate, flowering mid- to late-season. The

flower is miniature, trumpet-shaped, soft pink, and has an appealing honey scent. Together these features with its growth form give it potential as a hedge plant.

- ‘Best Wishes’ is a *Camellia pitardii* var. *pitardii* hybrid, of average height, dense structure and slow to medium growth rate, flowering mid to late-season. Leaves are small, 5.5 × 2.5 cm, of light green colour. The flower is 7 cm diameter × 3.5 cm deep, rose form double shading from pale pink to almost white at the centre, while the broad and ruffled petals are tipped at the edges with a darker pink giving the overall effect of a Victorian petticoat.
- ‘Icecream Smoothie’ is a *Camellia pitardii* var. *pitardii* hybrid that is spreading, of dense structure and slow growth rate, flowering mid-to late-season. Leaves are small, of dark green colour, while the peony-form flower is unusually large for the species.
- ‘Silver Screen’ is a *C. sasanqua* hybrid, of dense structure and medium to slow growth rate, with small dark green leaves. The flower is large or the species, with 10–11 petals that are waved and undulate, slightly obcordate in shape. The dense and compact plant growth makes it a good choice for low hedges.

Neville Haydon has been honoured by The New Zealand Camellia Society by being appointed an Honorary Life Member. He has also been awarded the RNZIH Plant Raiser’s Medal. His standing both nationally and internationally in the camellia world and his contributions to our Institute fully justifies his election as an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. He brings great distinction to the Institute.