

2009 Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Awards

Award in Garden History

Christopher Johnstone



Christopher Johnstone in Auckland's Eden Garden. Photo courtesy of NZ House & Garden.

"The creation of a beautiful garden is hard but satisfying work and part of the garden's reward is the pleasure it gives to others. The same can be said of paintings of gardens." These are the final words of the Introduction to Christopher Johnstone's *The painted garden in New Zealand art* published by Godwit in 2008. These words can be paraphrased to say that one of the rewards of Johnstone's efforts and his book is the pleasure they will bring to many readers.

Christopher Johnstone began his career as an art museum curator at the Tate Gallery in London and this was followed by positions at public art galleries in Scotland and Australia before he was appointed Director of the Auckland Art Gallery in 1988. After eight years he left the gallery to run his own business, which took him

back to Australia. Since returning to New Zealand in 2004 he has written extensively on New Zealand art.

The painted garden in New Zealand art is a splendidly illustrated account of gardening from the very first European gardens in New Zealand to current gardens. The author considers his book to be more about art history than about garden and gardening history but he probably underestimates just how valuable it is to have contemporary interpretations of garden history. This is a beautiful book, it is an excellent introduction to garden paintings, it is well written and the illustrations linger in the memory.

The Institute is pleased to acknowledge this important addition to the history of gardening in New Zealand.

Citation prepared by Ross Ferguson

Plant Raisers' Award

Peter Cave



Peter Cave had one of the most interesting nurseries in New Zealand that specialised in cool-temperate, mainly deciduous plants. His

catalogues were always enticing reading with a remarkable collection of plants – his last catalogue listed more than 550 plants, including 30 different magnolias. He introduced plants from around the world, but especially from Asia, and two of the most important of these were *Michelia yunnanensis* 'Velvet and Cream', selected from amongst seed from China, and *Michelia maudiae*.

In 2008, Peter closed his nursery at Cambridge after 31 years and it is therefore timely to acknowledge his achievements with the genus *Magnolia*. He had a special love and enthusiasm for the genus and was responsible for the breeding and selection of two outstanding magnolias:

Magnolia × 'Sweetheart', a selection first released in 1991. It is a seedling of ×*M.* 'Caerhays Belle' (*M. sargentiana* var. *robusta* × *M. sprengeri* 'Diva')

with the same erect, vigorous habit but the flowers are a deeper mid-pink and are presented upright. *M.* × 'Sweetheart' is registered by the International Magnolia Society.

Magnolia × 'Royal Purple' (*M.* × 'JC Williams' × *M. liliiflora* 'Nigra'). This is a small-growing tree, ideal for smaller gardens, which produces mid-sized, dark purple blooms.

Both cultivars have been praised by members of the International Magnolia Society and are popular here in New Zealand and in Europe.

We congratulate Peter Cave on these two outstanding cultivars.

Citation prepared by Ross Ferguson with the assistance of Gordon Collier

Associate of Honour

Michael Alan Ayrton



Michael Ayrton was raised as a youngster in Rawene on the Hokianga Harbour, Northland, and then attended Auckland Grammar School from 1975 to 1979. In 1980, he joined the New Zealand Forest Service and undertook training in Forest Management, including studying science at Auckland University and Parks and Recreation at Lincoln.

After completing his studies he worked as a Recreation Planner for the then Forestry Corporation in their Auckland office, followed by a similar role with the Department of Conservation. From 1989 to 1991 he was Senior Ranger at Wenderholm Regional Park for the Auckland Regional Authority.

In 1991 he was appointed to the position that he has held to the present day: Park Director for the Cornwall Park Trust Board in Auckland. During his time at Cornwall Park he has managed many new developments and improvements: redevelopment of the former US Army Hospital site in the park, redevelopment of the showgrounds,

extensions to the Cornwall Cricket Club, reconstruction of the Campbell Park Tennis Club, rebuilding of the Auckland Rugby League pavilion, rebuilding of the Carlton/Cornwall Bowling Club, conversion of Huia Lodge to an Information Centre for the Park, construction of the Education Centre to mark the centenary of the gifting of the Park, construction of the Centenary walkway to mark the centenary of the opening of the Park, and redevelopment of Cornwall Park Restaurant.

In addition, he has played an active role in many industry-related organisations, including:

- active membership of the New Zealand Arboriculture Association, from whom he received the Ron Flook Award in 1999 for his services to arboriculture in New Zealand;
- membership of the Unitec Institute of Technology Horticultural Advisory Committee for three years;
- membership of the New Zealand Recreation Association, serving as chair of the Auckland Branch;
- membership of the Parks Forum, being appointed a Board Member in 2008;
- Trustee of Highbrook Park, Manukau City.

Michael Ayrton joined the Institute in 1993 and since then has contributed much to our organisation. For nine years (1998 to 2007) he was a member of the National Executive and represented the Institute on the Board of the New Zealand Horticultural Training Organisation from 2001 to 2007. In 2000, he helped to organise a meeting of garden owners at Eden Gardens, Auckland, and this was an important step in the formation of what is now the RNZIH New Zealand Gardens Trust.

During his time on the HITO board, and largely thanks to his input, a relationship developed between RNZIH and HITO which led, in 2004, to the formation of the RNZIH Education Trust with the aim of the Institute having an active role in promoting excellence in horticultural training. He was one of the founding board members of the Education Trust and played an active role in its management, including a heavy involvement in the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition, until standing down in 2007 in order to have more time to organise a parks conference.

Michael Ayrton has contributed much to the Institute, to horticultural education and to New Zealand horticulture in general. He has also rendered distinguished service to the citizens of Auckland. Cornwall Park is widely accepted nowadays as the premier recreational reserve on the Auckland isthmus and is extensively used by residents and visitors to the region, attracting some four million visitors annually.

Michael Ayrton is a most worthy Associate of Honour of our Institute.

Citation prepared by Andrew Maloy

Associate of Honour

Denis Frank Hughes



Jack Hobbs (President of the RNZIH) presents Denis Hughes with his award certificate.

Denis Hughes is a much respected horticulturist, plantsman and plant breeder, well known and widely recognised in New Zealand and abroad. He completed his Diploma in Horticulture from Lincoln College in 1963 (the same year he joined the RNZIH) and then went into business with his late wife, Margaret, as owner and manager of Blue Mountain Nurseries in Tapanui. He and Margaret were very much a partnership in horticulture and they developed the nursery significantly from those early years. Today, it produces plants for national distribution to other nurseries, garden centres, landscapers and councils. The nursery extends over 12 hectares and produces hundreds of thousands of plants each year.

The combined enthusiasm, energy and expertise of Denis and Margaret Hughes meant that Blue Mountain became known far and wide for its rare and unusual plants. Denis Hughes, like his father, became a great plant collector and today the nursery has stock plants of more than 7000 different plant cultivars. Rhododendrons are a particular passion; he produced the first plants of *Rhododendron* 'Crest' in New Zealand and his wife bred *Rhododendron* 'City of Dunedin' (the feature plant for the 150th anniversary of Dunedin City). Also of special note are the range of deciduous azaleas known as "The Blue Mountain Azaleas" and *Agapanthus* 'Blue Mountain'. These are just a few examples of the additions to their plant list that are a result of his plant breeding programmes, taking many years of patient breeding, trial and selection.

He has been an active member of international specialist societies such as the International Plant Propagators Society, the Rhododendron Society, the International Dendrology Society, the American Conifer Society and the Alpine Garden Society, as well as many others. He has written papers for The International Plant Propagators Society as well as many articles on plants. He is a sought-after speaker and has presented talks and given demonstrations for many years to a wide range of groups and organisations in the world of plants and gardens. He has actively supported and made contributions to improving training in our industry, advocating apprenticeship and other systems for letting young people get the skills and experience they require. His work for horticulture was acknowledged by his being elected a Fellow of the Institute in 1990.

Denis Hughes has travelled overseas, collecting plants in the wild, visiting gardens, making connections with growers and being an unpaid ambassador for horticulture in New Zealand for many years. His humility, consideration and respect for others always guarantees that time spent with him is both a pleasure and an education. His time is always given generously and his passion for all things to do with plants cannot fail to inspire.

Denis Hughes has rendered distinguished service to horticulture in New Zealand. He is a most worthy candidate for election as an Associate of Honour of the Institute and in honouring him we also take the opportunity of recognising the many contributions of several generations of his family to horticulture in this country.

In preparing this citation, the contribution of information by his son Chris Hughes, General Manager of Blue Mountain Nurseries, is appreciated and acknowledged.

Citation prepared by Mick Reece

Plants bred or introduced by Blue Mountain Nurseries include:

Agapanthus 'Blue Mountain'
Astelia 'Westland'
Azalea 'Baby Girl'
Azalea 'Charlotte de Rothschild'
Azalea 'Midas Touch'
Azalea 'Mollie'
Azalea 'Nicholas de Rothschild'
Azalea 'Pavlova'
Azalea 'Pink Chiffon'
Azalea 'Softlights'
Azalea 'Sunray'
Betula 'Black Magic'
Chaenomeles 'Emerald'
Chaenomeles 'Mrs Murphy's Red'
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Blue Mountain'
Cheiranthus 'Beth'
Clematis paniculata 'Bridal Veil'
Clematis cartmanii 'Sweet Hart'
Coprosma 'Cattle Flat'
Coprosma 'Clearwater Gold'
Coprosma 'Little Walter'
Cornus 'Greenvale'
Cornus 'Silver Lining'
Cupressus glabra 'Lemon Spire'
Daphne bholua 'Pink Ice'
Galanthus elwesii 'Emerald'
Juniperus recurva 'Audrey'
Juniperus recurva 'Ron'
Leucothoe fontanesiana "Compact Form"
Leucothoe fontanesiana "1994"
Lavender angustifolia 'Blue Mountain'
Lavender angustifolia 'White Mountain'
Malus 'Blue Mountain'
Metrosideros umbellata 'Christmas Dream'
Metrosideros umbellata 'Kaka'
Nothofagus fusca 'Rainbow'
Olearia arborescens (variegated, not yet named)
Olearia 'Fiordland'
Parahebe 'Mt Dalgety'
Parahebe 'Mt Herbert'
Pleione Alishan 'Tui'
Pleione formosana 'Silver Lining'
Potentilla 'Wendonside'
Pseudowintera colorata 'Red Leopard'
Rhododendron 'City of Dunedin'
Rhododendron 'Dear One'
Rhododendron 'Happy Anniversary'
Sorbus 'Apricot Sunset'
Sorbus 'Rose Sunset'
Sorbus 'Winter Sunset'
Spiraea 'Cristata'