ROYAL NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE

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Presidential Ponderings

As someone once said, “we live in interesting times”. In today’s world everything is interesting, and we must take time to learn, evaluate and consider what today’s decisions will have on our future. From a horticulturists perspective that future is not tomorrow or the next day but 10, 15, 20 years or even further out.

Why? We deal with living things that take time to establish, grow and flourish. Trees take years to establish and reach the size and maturity that was envisioned. Shrubs and climbers take less time to contribute to the landscape and to wildlife. Annuals, bulbs and perennials provide colour, form, and texture, and the interface between soil and all plantings. Without plants our world would die.

This simplified outline shows the need for horticulturists to have a wide knowledge of plants, their growth habits, soil and climate requirements, relationships to wildlife and nature, soils, fungi, botany, plant physiology, pest and disease lifecycles, and more. An understanding of climate change, the need for fresh clean water, nature, education, digital systems and AI, and all aspects of health and well-being need to be in our thoughts, designs and actions, not only for ourselves but for those who come after us.

A few examples have surfaced recently to bring these things into perspective. You will think of more that may affect your work.

- Planning housing on New Zealand’s most valuable and productive soils
- The proposed demolition of Wellington’s Begonia House, housing valuable plant collections
- Fresh water planning
- Selling land for carbon farming
- Closing of horticultural and arboriculture courses in Polytechnics and Universities
- Funding reductions for science research
- The price of coffee and chocolate (they make great horticultural case studies).

In discussion with a horticultural colleague, we recognised the need for continuous learning. Nothing stands still; new and improved knowledge is always arriving. Horticulturists must evaluate knowledge, add their experience, and the experience of others, to apply new approaches and techniques to ensure we are competitive, sustainable, and leading best practice in our respective fields.

Continuous learning can be informal self-directed study, studying for further qualifications, or part of a continuing professional development programme. Many of us have used the informal self-directed study route; however, with employers looking for motivated horticulturists there may be a need to introduce a professional development system across all sectors of horticulture.

In the last two months I have met with the NZ Professional Florists at their AGM in Christchurch. This was great as the two

organisations agreed back in 1948 that the RNZIH would attach its seal to their Diplomas. Today they have a neat and comprehensive system of certificates and a Diploma with subjects comprising NZQA Unit Standards and their own subjects. It is unique and it works well.

The subjects include botany and plant physiology, plant knowledge and botanical names, flower care, management in all aspects of floral design, report writing and oral and practical tests.

In late October I attended the Young Horticulturist Competition in Auckland (see my separate report in this newsletter). It was nice to be there again and observe young people participating in a horticultural competition at the highest level. All competitors were outstanding.

In Dunedin on the 1st–2nd November 2024, the International Plant Propagators' Society New Zealand (IPPS-NZ) ran a free symposium titled 'Experiences, Aspirations, and Opportunities', hosted by the Dunedin Botanic Garden as a way of introducing more people to the industry. Around 40 people attended. Hopefully its success inspired people to consider developing a career in horticulture.

During the last few months, I have had the opportunity to talk to people about the horticultural industry – especially discussing the need for more people to make horticulture a career. As I noted earlier, we need people who are well trained, capable of considering new information, and making informed decisions that will take the sector forward into a changing world.

The more knowledge we have, the better position we will be in to connect with others in the broad horticultural sector, and to share this knowledge so that together we can advance all aspects of horticulture to meet new challenges that the world needs.

Alan Jolliffe
President, RNZIH

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Congratulations

The International Plant Propagators' New Zealand (IPPS–NZ) awards were presented at their annual conference, held in Timaru 4–7th April, and published in their June 2024 newsletter. Congratulations to their two awardees, as follows.

Ian Williams received the John Follett Award of Recognition for service to IPPS New Zealand.

Ian Williams holding his John Follett Award of Recognition. Photo: IPPS–NZ.

Ian was born in Chester, England in 1954 and has worked in horticulture ever since leaving school in 1969. His first job was in the rose department at Bees Nursery, Chester, where a summer season job turned into a lengthy 14 years. During his time there, Ian learnt many skills and among the highlights was attending numerous Chelsea Flower Shows. After leaving Bees Nursery in 1983, Ian and his wife Jackie travelled all over Europe working as contract budders and grafters, then on to Australia and New Zealand, before settling in Nelson in 1991. After seven years at Waimea Nurseries, Ian moved to Appleton's, then on to Thirkettle Nurseries, where he is still grafting citrus and fruit trees. Ian joined IPPS–NZ in 1994 after attending a Conference in Wellington. He joined the committee in 2004 and worked his way up to President from 2010–2012. Ian has been a regular attendee at conferences and field trips and is always willing to share his knowledge of budding and grafting at these events.

Graeme Watts (known to many as "Wattie") received the IPPS–NZ President's Award, in recognition of grassroots service to IPPS, and presented by outgoing President Lisa Burton.

Graeme Watts holding his IPPS-NZ President's Award. Photo: IPPS–NZ.

Born in Waimate, Wattie became a Gardening Assistant for the Waimate Borough Council after leaving school in 1975, completing his Diploma in Horticulture through the Open Polytechnic in 1993 and working his way up to Superintendent in 1994. After 45 years of service, working alongside hundreds of people through his role managing swimming pools, sports grounds, and numerous parks and reserves all over the Waimate District, Wattie clocked out from the Waimate Council. A highlight for Wattie was gaining arboretum status for Knottingley Park. He joined Headford Propagators, as Nursery Production Manager, in 2021. Wattie joined IPPS in 2001 and served on the Committee from 2014–2018.

Nearly 100 plant propagators and producers attended the conference in Timaru where presentations were made on a range of topics and visits made to nurseries and other local attractions. There was also a series of practical demonstrations on topics ranging from sharpening tools to making cuttings.

Next year's IPPS New Zealand conference is in New Plymouth, 8–11th May 2025, and will feature several international delegates as it is the New Zealand Regions' turn to host the international tour and meeting. For further information, see www.nz.ipps.org.

Waikato rosarian **Janet Pike** was presented with life membership of the New Zealand Rose Society Inc (NZRS) at their Annual General Meeting in Christchurch, 11 May 2024.

Life member Janet Pike alongside NZRS President Hayden Foulds. Photo: NZRS.

Janet joined the Waikato Rose Society in 1978 and continues to be an active member, currently serving as their President. The Frank Penn Memorial Award for service to a district rose society was presented to Janet in 2018. In 2013, Janet was elected to the NZRS Council and has been part of the Exhibitions/Judging and Conventions subcommittee. Serving as National President from 2018–2021, the second half of Janet's time as President saw many events cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Janet kept in touch with many rosarians around New Zealand by email and phone calls during this unsettling time. Janet has attended many National Rose Shows and has been involved with organising such shows when hosted by the Waikato Rose Society. Janet exhibits her roses to a high standard, especially miniature type roses. She also exhibits her roses around rose shows in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty regions and is a strong supporter of the Upper North Island Rose Ranfurly.

The New Zealand Rose Society Inc (NZRS) conferred the New Zealand Rose Award 2024 on Whanganui rose grower and breeder **Bob Matthews**.

NZRS President Hayden Foulds presenting the 2024 New Zealand Rose Award to Bob Matthews. Photo: NZRS.

Bob has had a lifelong passion for roses, something which started from a young age growing up around them with his parents Tom and Pearl Matthews who established Matthews Nurseries Ltd in 1947. Leaving school, Bob worked in the nursery while also working as an agricultural contractor. He also completed some short courses at Lincoln University.

Meeting his wife Cath in 1978, they took over the business from Bob's parents. Over the years, Matthews became one of New Zealand's largest and leading rose growers, growing up to 300,000 bush and 50,000 standards each season during peak production levels in the 1990s. Passionate about growing quality plants, Bob has been a strong advocate for producing

virus free plants and has educated other growers and the public on the benefits of virus free rose plants.

Bob has given many hours of his time and expertise to the wider rose industry over the years. He has served on the committee as one of the Rose Industry representatives that oversee the International Rose Trials in Palmerston North for more than 20 years. He also oversaw the development of the New Zealand Rose of the Year trials in Hamilton. Bob was also a director of Rose Introducers of New Zealand Ltd (RINZ) and served as Chairman of the Rose Growers Group for the Nursery and Garden Industry Association (NGINZ).

Through Matthews, Bob has donated many rose plants to gardens around New Zealand and to other causes. He has also welcomed numerous groups and individuals, including those from rose societies, to the nursery where he has given them a tour of operations. Bob has also given countless talks and demonstrations to groups on all aspects of rose growing.

Bob began breeding roses in the early 1990s. His first commercial success was 'Anniversary' (Mattlace) which was named for the 50th anniversary of Matthews Nurseries. This won Bob the Gold Star of the South Pacific at the NZRS trials in Palmerston North in the same year. Since then, Bob has released more than 60 selections from his breeding program onto the New Zealand market, and also has selections sold in England, France, the Netherlands and South Africa.

His selections are known for their health, easy care nature and repeat flowering abilities. For the last 20 years, Bob has trialled his seedlings under a completely spray free trial environment ensuring only the healthiest selections are introduced.

In 2024, Bob's breeding work was recognised by the RNZIH with the presentation of the Plant Raisers' Award.

Bob's roses have won numerous awards at the New Zealand Rose Society trials in Palmerston North, and he has also gained awards overseas at rose trials at The Hague (Netherlands), Belfast (Northern Ireland) and Baden-Baden (Germany).

Bob's most well-known and popular cultivar is 'My Mum' named for his mother Pearl. This selection tops the list of the most popular floribunda selections as voted by members of the New Zealand Rose Society and has become a popular cultivar for exhibition at rose shows.

Bob Matthews with his NZRS Award, standing alongside his rose 'My Mum'. Photo: © Samantha Matthews, Matthews Nurseries Ltd, December 2024.

Bob has named roses for various causes including 'Lest We Forget' (Mattzac) for the Returned Serviceman's Association, 'Pink Ribbon' (Mattprin) for the Breast Cancer Foundation' and 'Blue September' (Mattpro) for the Prostate Cancer Foundation New Zealand.

In addition to breeding roses, Bob has been involved with importing new rose selections from overseas breeders through Matthews Nurseries Ltd. After years of quarantine and

trialling, many new selections have been introduced to the New Zealand market.

Bob has travelled overseas visiting other growers and breeders and he has judged at International Rose Trials. Bob also presented lectures at the WFRS Regional Convention in Argentina in 2001 and in Palmerston North in 2013. He was also part of the breeder's panel at the Regional Convention held in Auckland in 2004.

In recognising Bob's immense contribution to the world of roses, acknowledgement must also be made of Bob's family who have supported him over the decades – especially his wife Cath who has worked alongside him for 46 years. Bob's children Samantha and Thomas are becoming more involved in the business with Samantha taking on the roses and rose breeding while Thomas looks after cropping and agricultural contracting.

Congratulations Bob on this new honour.

One of our 2024 Associates of Honour, **John McCullough** and his company Egmont Seeds of New Plymouth received further recognition this year.

John McCullough being interviewed. Photo: Seven Sharp.

In September, Seven Sharp Reporter Carolyn Robinson wrote an article about John, who was also interviewed (see www.1news.co.nz/2024/09/19/the-story-behind-new-zealands-blooming-seed-supplier/) – congratulations John and team!

Congratulations to **Mark van Kaathoven**, NZ Gardens Trust (NZGT) member and founder of the Urban Jungle (Auckland) for his recent accomplishments. Mark spoke of his work – on the creative use of green waste to reduce landfill, restore healthy soil dynamics and to protect against drought and flood – at the 11th World Green Infrastructure Congress at the University of Auckland on the 4th of September, and on the following day the delegates inspected what has been put into practice at the Freemans Bay Park Gardens.

Mark van Kaathoven at the entrance to Freemans Bay Park Gardens. Photo: NZGT.

Following from this, Mark also presented at the International Climate Adaptation Research Institute's Conference 'More Climate Resilient Cities 2024', held in Bratislava, Slovakia, 22–23rd October. Also in October, Mark was interviewed by RNZ (see www.rnz.co.nz/search/results?q=Mark+van+Kaathoven&commit=Search for this and past interviews).

Congratulations to **Dr Jessica Beever** of Auckland for receiving the Allan Mere award for 2024. This award is made annually to a person or persons who have made outstanding contributions to botany in New Zealand, either in a professional or amateur capacity. For more than four decades, Jessica has been involved in collecting, researching and publishing on New Zealand mosses – she has published some 120 papers. Jessica is one of very few bryologists in New Zealand and one of only two writing the new moss eFlora. Jessica is well liked and highly respected throughout New Zealand – and in bryological circles overseas – and highly deserving of the award. It is also fitting that Jessica's award sits

Anthony Wright, President of the New Zealand Botanical Society, presenting Jessica with the Allan Mere at an Auckland Botanical Society Meeting on 2nd October 2024.

alongside that of her late husband Ross as an earlier recipient (in 2010). Ross and Jessica become the first husband and wife duo to be separately awarded the Allan Mere. Jessica was jointly nominated by the Auckland and Wellington Botanical Societies to recognise her considerable contributions to the botanical understanding of New Zealand mosses. The nomination was supported by three other Botanical Societies and five individuals.

Congratulations to **Dr Mike Wilcox** of Auckland for receiving the Ron Flook Award for 2024.

This award was presented to Mike for his outstanding contributions to the arboricultural community and his promotion of trees in New Zealand. Over many decades, Mike has made a profound impact through his ongoing efforts to enhance public knowledge and appreciation of trees. His extensive work in tree identification, particularly within *Eucalyptus*, has greatly benefited arborists and tree enthusiasts alike. Mike's knowledge has been invaluable to the arboricultural community, assisting professionals in identifying species and fostering a deeper understanding of trees. Mike is the author of *Auckland's Remarkable Urban Forest*, a seminal work that has broadened the public's awareness of the city's tree diversity and ecological importance. For many years, he has led tree tours at Cornwall Park and other iconic locations, sharing his passion for trees with the public and inspiring a deeper connection with the natural environment. Mike has recently also published with his co-authors *Nature in the City: Botany of Auckland's Cornwall Park and Maungakiekie/ One Tree Hill Domain* (reviewed in the December 2024 issue of the RNZIH journal). Mike's commitment to education, advocacy, and expanding the general public's knowledge of trees aligns well with the Ron Flook award, which was presented to him during the NZ Arb conference in Auckland, 9–11th October 2024. Mike has earlier been recognised by the RNZIH, when in 2014 he received the Garden History Award.

The 2024 NZ Plant Conservation Network (NZPCN) awards were announced at their conference in Whangārei, held 6–9 October, and published in their newsletter *Trilepidea* (www.nzpcn.org.nz/site/assets/files/0/77/393/trilepidea_october_2024_final.pdf). Congratulations to all six deserving recipients.

Shannel Courtney received the prestigious 'Lifetime Achievement Award' for his more than 40-year career as a plant ecologist, including 37 years with New Zealand's Department of Conservation (DOC). Renowned for his expertise in indigenous flora, particularly in the northern South Island, Shannel has made significant contributions to plant conservation

through his work in ecology, taxonomy, and biogeography. He has been a longstanding member of the national vascular plant conservation status panel, influencing conservation priorities and management. Shannel has collaborated with researchers, local iwi, and conservationists, discovering and naming new species while mentoring others in the field. His efforts have enhanced New Zealand's conservation framework, fostering relationships among botanic gardens, nurseries, herbaria, and the broader research community.

Kevin Matthews received the award for 'Individual Involved in Plant Conservation' for his lifelong dedication to conservation in New Zealand's Far North.

Kevin Matthews, recipient of the 2024 NZPCN award for 'Individual Involved in Plant Conservation'.

A farmer in Kaitaia, Kevin continues his family's botanical legacy, actively contributing to local conservation projects, such as the Bushlands Trust's rehabilitation of Aupouri Peninsula dune lakes. An expert naturalist with vast knowledge of plants, orchids, birds, and local and Māori history, Kevin has mentored aspiring botanists, collaborated with iwi and communities, and supported botanical and scientific initiatives. Kevin has a keen interest in orchid conservation and has made many contributions to the New Zealand Native Orchid Group. Other work includes revegetating wetlands, combating water quality issues, eradicating invasive species, and advocating for sustainable water use. Kevin is deservedly recognised for his lifetime of volunteer contributions to the conservation of threatened plants in the Far North, even more so given that he has achieved this while managing and maintaining the family farm.

Joy Plants, founded by Terry and Pam Hatch more than 55 years ago and now managed by their son Lindsey, has received the 'Plant Nursery Involved in Plant Conservation' award for its significant contributions to native plant restoration in New Zealand.

JOY NURSERIES

The nursery has been a cornerstone of projects like the replanting of Tiritiri Matangi in the 1980s, 30 years of conservation on Ahuahu/ Great Mercury Island, and numerous restoration initiatives across the North Island. Joy Plants specialises in cultivating rare and nationally critical native species, emphasising genetic diversity and resilience through seed collection. Their philosophy of sharing knowledge and plants has supported conservationists, schools, and community groups in preserving endangered species such as *Metrosideros bartlettii* and *Pennantia baylisiana*. With decades of dedication and an infectious enthusiasm, the Hatch family and Joy Plants have played a vital role in helping safeguard New Zealand's native flora.

Hedgehope School has won the 'School Plant Conservation Project' award for its exceptional work in Sherwood Forest, Southland, a rare floodplain forest protected by a QEII covenant and home to threatened plant species, native moths, and birdlife.

Hedgehope School

REACHing for Greatness

Supported by the forest's landowners, the school uses the area as an outdoor classroom, visiting regularly – even in challenging weather – to explore and learn about biodiversity. Their stewardship includes pest and weed control, propagating native plants, and actively supporting forest health. They also share their conservation efforts widely, presenting at conferences, collaborating with other schools, hosting environmental hui, and creating a YouTube series, 'Sherwood Sharp', to document their activities.

The **Rotorua Botanical Society** won the NZPCN's 'Community Plant Conservation Project' award for the Ōkāreka Mistletoe Restoration Project/Tikitapu Scenic Reserve Pest Control Project.

Initiated in 2002, the project aimed to increase the population and distribution of two threatened mistletoe species, *Ileostylus micranthus* and *Tupeia antarctica*, in Tikitapu Scenic Reserve. Sustained plant and animal pest control efforts by volunteers from the Rotorua Botanical Society, Rotorua Forest and Bird, supported by Landcare Ōkāreka, DOC and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, have led to remarkable success. From just 218 *Tupeia* plants in 2001, the population grew to over 8,100 *Ileostylus* and *Tupeia* in 2024, making this the largest known population of mistletoes in the Rotorua District. The project highlights the power of community conservation efforts in protecting New Zealand's native flora.

Northland Regional Council (NRC) received the 2024 'Local Government Plant Conservation Award' for its extensive contributions to native plant conservation.

NRC fosters enduring partnerships with mana whenua (indigenous people), community groups, and landowners, empowering them with skills and knowledge to take conservation action and share it with others. Its initiatives include monitoring more than 100 lakes and 30 wetlands to protect rare species and improve water quality, leading coastal restoration projects, and supporting CoastCare groups to plant 15,000 dune plants in the past year. NRC also conducts weed workshops, supports weed action volunteers, and organises events like bioblitzes and botanical rambles to enhance public understanding of biodiversity. Additionally, its Land Management team has fenced and planted native forests, wetlands, and riparian margins, reducing erosion and sedimentation in vulnerable habitats, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to safeguarding Northland's native flora.

On the subject of conservation and ecology, congratulations to Dunedin-based **Dr Maureen Howard**, for hosting a new show *Rewilding in Action*.

The first episode interviewed International Dendrology Society NZ Vice President **Peter Cooke** and partner **Anna Moore**, who spoke about their work preserving indigenous forest at Hereweka on the Otago Peninsula.

Anna Moore and Peter Cooke. Photo: Rewilding in Action.

See https://oar.org.nz/rewilding-in-action/ and the *Rewilding in Action* YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLb6ValA0zfn8J7JtoH0cuZrDOI0nNl070.

A new documentary *Here the Wild Things Are* covers the 2024 iNaturalist NZ City Nature Challenge, by interviewing botanists and ecologists from Wellington (**Leon Perrie** and **Lara Shepherd**) and Christchurch (NZ Biodiversity Recording Network Trustees Jon **Sullivan** and **Colin Meurk**), as well as **Marley Ford**.

Jon Sullivan appearing in the documentary *Here the Wild Things Are*. Photo: Loading Docs.

Congratulations to the producers **Kelly Gilbride**, **Madison Smith**, and **Julia Parnell** for their excellent short film (viewable at https://loadingdocs.net/short/here-the-wild-things-are/).

Congratulations to ***NZ Gardener* magazine** for reaching their 80-year-old milestone of publication. To mark this anniversary, a November special edition explores New Zealand's horticultural history through the *NZ Gardener* archive, from its beginnings during World War II. Editor **Jo McCarroll** (the RNZIH Horticultural Communicator for 2023) was interviewed by RNZ (www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/saturday/audio/2018966424/nz-gardener-turns-80) and **Jo and Jack Hobbs** were interviewed in a Seven Sharp feature (https://play-images-prod-cms.tech.tvnz.co.nz/shows/seven-sharp/clips/celebrating-80-years-of-the-nz-gardener-magazine) marking this milestone.

Jo McCarroll, editor of *NZ Gardener*. Photo: *NZ Gardener*.

President Alan Jolliffe has sent letters of commendation to several recipients, congratulating them on behalf of the RNZIH. A letter was sent to **Terry, Pam and Lindsey Hatch** for their NZPCN award (as above), and to the following.

Margaret and Geoff Allison were congratulated for revitalising the unique collection of New Zealand-bred dahlias at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, a display unmatched elsewhere.

Alan Jolliffe presenting a letter of commendation to Margaret and Geoff Allison.

Despite limited prior experience with dahlias, the Allisons volunteered five years ago to restore the deteriorating collection. Their efforts included removing virus-infected plants, sourcing healthy replacements, and collaborating with the wider dahlia community. Their dedication resulted in a significantly improved display that has drawn the admiration of local residents and tourists alike, celebrating the beauty and heritage of these distinctive flowers.

Peter Grundy has been commended by the RNZIH for 40 years of exemplary horticultural leadership and service to Nelson City Council and the city of Nelson. As a Fellow of the Institute since 1990, Peter was congratulated for significantly enhancing Nelson's parks and gardens through initiatives such as annual floral displays, plant collections, edible plant integration, garden history preservation, and storm recovery tree planting.

Peter Grundy planting an Illawarra flame tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) in Queen's Gardens, Nelson, on his last day after 40 years' service.

His passion for horticulture has made Nelson's green spaces standout tourist attractions for both New Zealand and international visitors. Known for his collaborative and supportive approach, Peter has inspired colleagues and brought lasting value to the city's horticultural landscape. His remarkable career and contributions leave a lasting legacy as he enjoys a well-earned retirement.

Alan Jolliffe has also sent letters of congratulations to the five finalists and winner of the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition (see his following report).

Report on the Young Horticulturist of the Year Competition

Young Horticulturist OF THE YEAR
KAIAHUONE RANGATAHI O TE TAU

I joined the competitors, judges, and others about 9.30am on Thursday 31st October and spent much of the day observing the activities and meeting people from various sectors of the horticultural industry. During the day I erected a display of RNZIH posters and copies of our journal.

I met with Shaun Trevan, RNZIH NZ Education Trust Chair, and we had an enjoyable conversation about the Competition and his desire to foster close relations with the RNZIH. Shaun offered to join our executive meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest. I met the Education Trust Trustees during the day, who were all very welcoming.

I also met with Shona Willis, who was busy with organising her first Young Horticulturist Competition. Shona was on the ball getting everything ready and meeting people attending the event. Overall, everything went well.

The Oral and Practical day was as you would expect it to be albeit not quite as busy as usual with five sector competitors this year. Assessors were from different organisations in the horticultural industry. For me, it was interesting to compare the contemporary Competition with the old RNZIH Oral and Practical days some decades ago where there could be 20 or more students.

Topics for the Competition included Machinery (tractor and weather station), Weed identification and control, Management and Finance, Biosecurity, Propagation and Pruning, HR and Health and Safety.

A final leadership activity was where each competitor received the same task and two helpers to complete.

Marking was on leadership demonstrated towards the helpers.

An independent moderator Jill Reader from Lincoln University oversaw the day.

It was a rewarding experience to be able to speak directly to all the Finalists and offer them the 3-year membership to the RNZIH. All five have enthusiastically signed up and thought it was a great benefit to them.

Awards evening
The evening was in the same location at Karaka as previous years with a similar format.

Prior to the evening, I had a meeting with Shona Willis. She advised that last year there were too many speeches and wanted to keep them shorter. This gave me an opportunity to shorten my own presentation.

The evening started with a welcome by the MC and proceeded quickly to the Competitors speeches. These speeches were limited to two minutes which I found to be a little tight, but all were well delivered.

During the Judges deliberations I spoke about the competition, support from sponsors and about the recognition of horticulturists through the RNZIH Awards. My talk received positive feedback including thanks from Trustees. It was good to be able to place the RNZIH on centre stage.

Awardees

- **Winner: Anna England**, of Elliott's Wholesale Nursery, Amberley, Canterbury.
- **Second: Kyla Mathewson**, of Dunedin Botanic Garden.
- **Third: Craig Scott**, an arborist of Motueka.

I have written to the winner and all finalists to congratulate them on behalf of the RNZIH.

Sponsorship
All sponsors were in attendance.

Woolworths are committed to the competition as are the others which hopefully means ongoing support.

The Awards Dinner finished about 9.15pm, perhaps an hour earlier than the previous year.

Alan Jolliffe
President RNZIH

2024 Young Horticulturist Results

Anna England of Amberley, North Canterbury, has been named the 2024 Young Horticulturist of the Year.

Anna England, 2024 Young Horticulturist of the Year. Photo: RNZIH NZ Education Trust.

Speaking after winning the coveted Young Horticulturist (Kaiahuone rangatahi o te tau) title at the finals in Karaka on 31st October 2024, Anna said her feeling of disbelief over the win quickly turned to one of "great excitement." Her partner, parents and employers were all there to share the moment.

Anna represents the Young Plant Producer sector and works as a sales coordinator for Elliott's Wholesale Nursery. She has a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Information Systems, a Diploma in Horticulture, and is completing her part time studies toward a diploma in Primary Industry Business Management.

The judges were impressed with how Anna applies her knowledge in business and IT, as well as horticulture, to a diverse role. They noted how her approach of continuous learning and working with different people to get great results is sure to see her continue to thrive.

Anna was up against four other finalists representing different sectors within the horticulture sector.

The competition is renowned for its rigour and finalists are judged on several challenges including practical skills, industry expertise, leadership ability, business knowledge and communication.

The five competing Young Horticulturist Competition sectors represented this year are: New Arborist (New Zealand Arboriculture Association Inc); Young Amenity (New Zealand Recreation Association); Young Viticulturist (New Zealand Winegrowers); Young Grower (Horticulture New Zealand Fruit & Vegetable Sectors); and Young Plant Producer (New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated). The five competitors were selected as finalists after competition placings within their own industries.

Kyla Mathewson of Dunedin was awarded second place. Kyla, a curator of the geographic collection at Dunedin Botanic Garden, represented the Young Amenity sector.

Third place went to **Craig Scott** of Motueka, representing the New Arborist sector.

From left to right: Kyla Mathewson, runner-up; Anna England, Young Horticulturist of the Year; Craig Scott, third placeholder. Photo: RNZIH NZ Education Trust.

Young Horticulturist chairperson Shaun Trevan says the finalists who competed over two days at the New Zealand Bloodstock Karaka Sales Complex represent the best in young horticultural talent in New Zealand.

"They are highly competent and forward-thinking young people seeding the country's horticultural future," he says.

The competition's 2024 prize pool equates to more than $56,500 in cash, professional development and leadership scholarships and products.

Anna's first prize includes $7,500 cash, plus a $7,500 Professional Development Package, including travel and accommodation. Anna says she'll spend the next while "dreaming up" where she may travel to further pursue "this amazing career of mine in horticulture". This is in addition to the Young Producer of the Year travel and education scholarship of $4,000 ($3,000 from NZPPI and $1,000 from IPPS).

The second prize is $5,000 cash, plus the same amount for professional development including travel and accommodation. The third prize is $2,500 in cash and same amount for professional development.

Shaun says the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition is important for horticulture in New Zealand and couldn't occur without the support of official partners, supporters, and friends of the competition. The official sponsors are Woolworths, Fruitfed Supplies, and T&G Fresh, and the silver sponsors are Bayer, Craigmore Sustainables, and Horticentre Charitable Trust.

Fruitfed Supplies sales manager Craig Trembath (left), alongside Taylor Leabourn (right), Fruitfed Supplies Leadership Winner. Taylor also won the Horticentre Sustainability and Craigmore Sustainables Best Speech awards. Photo: RNZIH NZ Education Trust.

The competition also includes Woolworths Innovation Project Prizes. First place ($5,000) went to Kyla, with Anna in second place ($2,500), and **Taylor Leabourn** (representing the Young Grower sector) in third place ($1,500).

Shaun Trevan: new RNZIH NZ Education Trust Chairperson

Shaun Trevan is the Park Manager for Cornwall Park, with more than 20 years' experience in the parks and arboriculture sectors. In Cornwall Park's expansive parkland of 172 hectares in the heart of Auckland, Shaun leads a team of nine staff to manage the renowned trees (over 8,000) and gardens (planting more than 25,000 annual plants and 10,000 bulbs) that make Cornwall Park so special.

Shaun has a passion for horticulture and supporting young people coming through the industry. His involvement in Young Horticulturist of the Year began 10 years ago, volunteering as a judge for the amenity sector and practical components of the competition. With ten years of judging experience behind him, in 2020 Shaun joined the RNZIH NZ Education Trust as a Trustee. Following a stint as Vice Chair, in May 2024 he was elected as Chair of the Trust.

Shaun lives at Cornwall Park with his family and enjoys fishing in his spare time.

NZ Gardens Trust

Garden assessments
During October 2024, the NZGT team of assessors, led by Jan Woodhouse and Paul Roper Gee, travelled throughout New Zealand in pairs completing the assessments of 24 gardens including eight new gardens. To ensure fairness and consistency, during December the results are presented to the entire assessing team, with a moderator and observers from the Board. The garden owners will be notified of their results before Christmas.

Collections Membership
This is a new membership type for the NZGT, for those who have a plant collection(s) and wish to share them with visitors. These collections are verified rather than assessed, so do not need to go through the star rating scheme required for Garden Membership. Both types of NZGT membership include membership of the RNZIH and subscription to the RNZIH journals and newsletters.

Begonia House
The NZGT are still hoping that the Wellington City Council will rethink the proposed decision to demolish the much-loved Begonia House at

Begonia House, Wellington Botanic Garden.
Photo: © Patina Photography, CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 NZ.

Wellington Botanic Garden. The Trust Board formally opposed the demolition during the first consultation process.

This opposition is shared by the RNZIH Executive, Friends of the Wellington Botanic Garden, and many other concerned individuals and interest groups. Currently, no doubt due to public pressure, Wellington City Council are reevaluating costings and options. There are already precedents for renovation and earthquake strengthening of historically significant glasshouses, including recent restorations of the Auckland Domain Wintergardens, Dunedin's public glasshouse, and Christchurch Botanic Gardens is just about to start refurbishing Cuningham House. Overseas, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Victorian Glasshouses are about to be revamped, Kew's Temperate House was rebuilt a few years ago and Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden glasshouse 'The Calyx' underwent significant reconfiguration, completed in 2016 to mark their 200th birthday.

2025 conference 'Diversity of Possibilities' Auckland, 3–6 April 2025

Immerse yourself in Auckland's breathtaking gardens and discover 'Diversity of Possibilities'. Celebrate the limitless potential of garden design while soaking in the city's natural beauty alongside fellow garden enthusiasts. Be inspired by Auckland's distinctive green spaces and connect with others who share a passion for innovation, creativity, and the art of gardening.

The 3rd April is an additional and optional day, focusing on a visit to the renowned Gibbs Farm sculpture collection, a world class collection of outdoor sculpture. During the remaining days, there will be visits to Mincher Garden, Omaio Garden, Barclays Garden, Brick Bay Sculpture Garden, the Marshall/Hayward Garden, the Urban Jungle, Jacobs Garden, Hollingsworth Garden, Auckland Domain Wintergarden, and more, finishing with conference speakers on Sunday 6th April.

The RNZIH AGM, award presentations, and Banks Memorial Lecture will be held during the NZGT conference, on Friday 4th April at the ANZ Centre, Auckland (opposite the Marriott Hotel) – full details will be in our March 2025 Newsletter. After socialising with drinks and nibbles at 6pm, the AGM and awards will begin at 6.30pm, followed by the Banks Lecture at 7pm. Professor Margaret Stanley, School of Biological Sciences, will deliver the 2025 Banks Memorial lecture on 'The Importance of Plants in Connecting People and Wildlife.'

The NZGT conference is now open for registration. Closing date for Early Bird Registrations is 31st December 2024, and final date for registrations is 15th March 2024.

The registration, itinerary, and accommodation details are at: www.gardens.org.nz/membership-payment/p/2025-new-zealand-gardens-trust-conference.

Leafy Lab report

LEAFY LAB
THE GREEN NETWORKING EVENT

Leafy Lab is an event dedicated to fostering innovation in green space design and management. It provides a collaborative space for professionals to share knowledge and devise solutions for sustainable urban environments.

Addressing urban design challenges requires more than just arborists; it needs input from everyone in landscaping, gardening,

architecture, and related fields. It is in this context that the organisers invited a representative from the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture to attend, by offering a complimentary ticket. Pippa Lucas attended and provided the following report.

The keynote presentation by David Stejskal (Regional Arboriculture and Ecology Manager at Auckland Council) explored Auckland Council's Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy, which aims to increase the city's canopy cover from 18% to 30%. While ambitious, the presentation outlined practical steps being taken, including community planting initiatives and policy adjustments. The talk provided useful context on balancing urban development with ecological preservation.

Consultant arborist Craig Webb's presentation delved into the maintenance practices at Oruamo Reserve. His observations raised critical questions about how urban parks are managed and whether these align with the goals of urban forestry. I found looking at park maintenance from an arborist's perspective interesting.

Sustainable gardening advocate Mark van Kaathoven discussed understory restoration and soil rehabilitation, including the use of green waste and wood chips. His experiences at sites like Waiatarau Freemans Bay Park illustrated how depleted ecosystems can be revitalized and how grassed areas that flood can act as a sponge to help mitigate flooding damage.

Mark van Kaathoven speaking on 'Sustainable Urban Forest Management: Insights from Oruamo Reserve and Understory Restoration Practices'. Photo: Pippa Lucas.

The Leafy Lab offered insights into urban forestry strategies. The emphasis on collaboration and adaptive management highlighted the broader landscape within which our work exists. It provided an opportunity to connect with peers and consider broader topics apart from the amenity sector in which I work.

The Leafy Lab event was an engaging occasion that contextualized some of the challenges and innovations in horticulture. I believe that this event would be valuable for the RNZIH to be involved with in the future. At present most attendees are in the arboriculture sector. It would be exciting to see where the event can go in the future with more sectors being involved. I can see it being great for networking and collaboration.

Thank you to the RNZIH for sponsoring my attendance at the recent Leafy Lab event. Their next event is on 26th February 2025 – see www.facebook.com/p/Leafy-Lab-61554209571720/ for updates.

Pippa Lucas
Collection Curator (South African Plants, Native Plants, Urban trees)
Auckland Botanic Gardens

Edinburgh report: 'Plants on paper'

Participants in the 'Plants on Paper' workshop, hosted by the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh.

In October this year, Dr Rebecca Rice, Acting Head of Art at Te Papa, attended a week-long workshop 'Plants on paper: curatorial practice and the decolonisation of collections of scientific prints and drawings' hosted by the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh, and funded by the Getty Institute.

She was one of ten artists and curators brought together from specific originating diaspora communities to participate in discussions about the roles of botanical art in decolonial practices, the scientific community, and beyond.

During the workshop, she and the other participants heard from leading botanists, art historians and botanical artists, and enjoyed remarkable access to the rich collections of the 'Botanics', particularly the botanical art, archive and rare books collections.

Lorna Mitchell, RBGE librarian with 19th century botanical diagrams.

Rebecca was very grateful to the RNZIH for their support ensuring a copy of *Flora: Celebrating our Botanical World* (Te Papa Press, 2023) has found a home in their collections. It was very warmly received.

The beginning of qualifications in floristry

100 Years 1923–2023

The NZ Institute of Horticulture was formed in 1923 and received its Royal Charter in March 1939, changing its name to the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture (RNZIH).

In its early years the Institute recognised the importance of a wide range of horticultural qualifications. It concentrated on developing certificates and diplomas in horticulture for the commercial and amenity sectors.

Florists were part of the broader horticultural sector, probably due to their close relationship with the nursery sector. In this short history the name or names of organisations involved with floristry are those reported in the *History of the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture* (1952/3). No doubt further research will note whether they are correct or not.

This account is in chronological order, as it appears to be the best way to show the development of the Diploma and Certificates in Floristry.

At a meeting of the RNZIH Examining Board in April 1935 a committee was appointed to finalise the syllabus for the Florists Certificate. It's not stated who was driving that proposal. By September 1935 the first applications for the Florists Certificate (without examination) were received and sent to advisors for recommendations. In December 1935 the Auckland Branch of the Institute circulated an announcement to florists in the Auckland Province to apply for the Certificate before 1st July 1936. The Examining Board decided to inform all florists throughout NZ advising the

same thing. Further applications for the Certificate were sent to advisors at this time.

The concept of issuing a certificate without examination seems to be common at that time and applied to all certificates and diplomas due to the lack of any previous acknowledgement of the knowledge and skill of existing and competent practitioners.

In August 1936 the Florists Telegraphic Delivery Association wrote to the RNZIH regarding examiners and examinations, and it was decided to accept names of examiners and any further advice the Association wished to give. At the same time applications were received for twenty-two Senior Certificates and these were granted without examination.

In November 1937 two more Senior Certificates were granted and two more in April 1938. In November 1938 the first two students for the Florists Certificate were registered and one Senior Certificate (without examination) was granted.

However, there must have been some issues on matters concerning the Florists Telegraph Distribution Association and two other groups who resigned from the Institute. The reasons are not recorded in the history but may be in the original minutes or the minutes of the organisations that resigned.

Over the next few years, these groups, the Horticultural Trades Association and the NZ Florists Telegraphic Association, and others, continued to have their Annual General Meetings to coincide with the RNZIH Conferences.

In March 1939 two more students enrolled in the Florists Certificate and examinations were to be arranged. Students continued to be enrolled and examined, and Certificates issued.

In May 1942 Mrs Dukes of New Plymouth was approved as a teacher of Art for the Florists students.

In November 1943 an American Serviceman applied for a Senior Certificate of Floral Art and he was asked to submit a certificate of service. There is no reference to the outcome of this application. In April 1945 three Florists were approved as training shops for the floral certificates in view of their membership of the NZ Florists Telegraphic Exchange. This approval is the first time it is mentioned.

In March 1946 the Examining Board was asked to consider amendments to the Florists Certificate. Meetings took place and in April 1946 it is reported that negotiations were taking place with the NZ Association of Floral Artists regarding the Florists Certificate.

Things appear to have started to heat up as the NZ Florists Telegraphic Exchange wrote to the RNZIH concerning Certificates in Floral Art and a subcommittee was established to interview interested parties and report to the RNZIH Executive. The next month any actions on the Florists Certificate were deferred.

By September 1947 a subcommittee was set up to confer with the NZ Society of Professional Florists over joint action on Certificates in Floral Art. This is the first mention of the Society and the first indication that the RNZIH and the NZ Society of Professional Florists were working together.

By April 1948 the Chairman of the RNZIH Examining Board reported he had met with the executive of the NZ Society of Professional Florists and had attended their florists' examination. He considered that the RNZIH should not reinstate examinations for a Florists Certificate. It was decided to meet the Examining Board of the Florists Society and come to an arrangement.

On 20 April 1948 a draft agreement with the NZ Society of Professional Floral Artists was approved whereby the RNZIH agreed to accept the Diploma and Certificates in Floral Art of this body and "fix the Institute's seal upon them". These Diplomas and Certificates then replaced the RNZIH Certificate in Floral Art. In return, the RNZIH had a representative on the Examining Board of the Floral Artists Society, as well as

other minor safeguards to ensure that satisfactory standards were maintained.

In December 1948 Mr T.S. Waugh, a Wellington nurseryman and seedsman, who had represented the Florists Telegraphic Delivery Exchange and was active in the RNZIH affairs since 1925, was appointed the Institute's representative on the Examining Board of the NZ Society of Professional Floral Artists finalising the agreement over Diplomas and Certificates in Florists Art.

Since 1948 the NZ Society of Professional Floral Artists, later the New Zealand Professional Florists, have designed and developed its own Diplomas and Certificates. It has also set standards, encouraged the sharing of knowledge, written unit standards, and conducted examinations.

The 1952/3 *History of the RNZIH* records the names of 52 recipients of the Senior Certificate in Florists' Art.

Today Diplomas and Certificates still receive the seal and signature of the RNZIH as well as those of the New Zealand Professional Florists.

It is always interesting to look back at history and think about how we got to today, the discussions, and the different points of view. The one thing that is clear is that everyone wanted qualifications that were of a high standard and would continue to serve the profession well into the future.

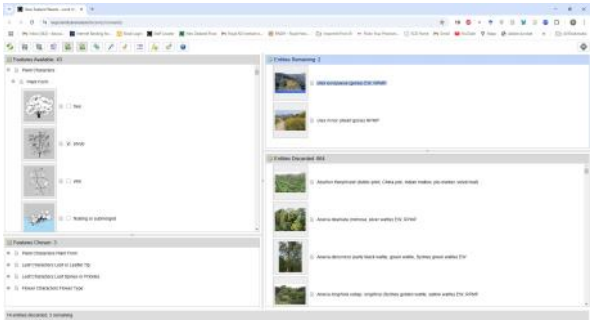
That same passion is evident today as members continue to improve aspects of floristry, and meet the challenges of technology and the market. No doubt members in the future will have their own challenges.

Reference

O'Sullivan, M.J. (1952/3). History of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. Published by the RNZIH. Available at www.rnzih.org.nz/pages/RNZIH_timeline.htm

Alan Jolliffe
President, RNZIH

NZ Weeds Key relaunched



The identification key to weed species of New Zealand has just been updated – see www.landcareresearch.co.nz/tools-and-resources/identification/key-to-the-weed-species-of-new-zealand/.

It was created by botanists and weed experts Murray Dawson, Sheldon Navie, Trevor James, Peter Heenan, and Paul Champion.

This key is for the identification of more than 650 weeds (species, subspecies, varieties, hybrids and cultivars) found throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. It's a user-friendly, interactive, hands-on tool that teaches people how to identify weeds (rather than relying on image recognition which is quick, but can be unreliable).

The key is also a centralised resource, with a carefully chosen image set to represent each species, and with links out to species profiles – on AgPest (https://agpest.co.nz/pest-directory/#weeds), Weedbusters (https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/), the National Pest Plant Accord (www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/how-to-find-report-and-prevent-pests-and-diseases/partnerships-programmes-and-accords/national-pest-plant-accord-for-preventing-the-sale-of-invasive-weeds-in-nz/), and others.

This resource has been available on the Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research website since 2007 and has been progressively expanded and updated over the years – until now, the last major update was five years ago. Feedback welcomed!

Murray Dawson

New members

We warmly welcome our new members.

General members:

Jenny Hunt	Pirongia
Philip Smith	Aokautere
Matthew Young	Lower Hutt
NZ Rhododendron Association	

Young Horticulturist finalists:

Tai Nelson	Auckland
Taylor Leabourn	Auckland
Craig Scott	Motueka
Anna England	Amberley
Kyla Mathewson	Mosgiel

NZGT members:

Longbush Cottage, Wairarapa: Luke Gardener & Ben Quay

Omaka Lodge, Taumaranui: Christopher Riches & Scott Riches-McPherson

Merry Christmas to all our members and best wishes for the New Year

From the RNZIH executive

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