



## ROYAL NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE

### Newsletter

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## Presidential Ponderings

I have returned from a four-week holiday to Europe which was great. We enjoyed the history, countryside, cities and life of Europe. Along the way I was able to make some observations related to horticulture and reflect on how New Zealanders might react to what we saw.

I note Geoffery Marshall (RNZIH Executive Member) was also there at the same time and he posted a few pictures of similar things I observed.

Across Europe there is a strong emphasis on nature, biodiversity, naturalistic plantings, wilding and natural areas. There appears to be two drivers for this.

The most obvious driver is 'sustainability and biodiversity'. I noticed the beginning of this back in 2012 at the Chelsea Flower Show where naturalistic gardens and landscapes were on display but in a quite formal way. More than 10 years later this had spread across Europe to a wide range of locations – most notably in public spaces and parks.

The second driver appears to be financial and therefore political. I recall thinking that a few more resources would be great including well trained horticulturists.

I observed public parks unmown with long grass and what we might call weeds and little ongoing maintenance or control. And trees with little arboricultural attention. In some areas there is great succession planting of trees. Roadside plantings of perennials left unattended and full of 'grass and weeds'. Horticulturally significant areas were not of a standard we might expect in



A public place in Vienna, with unkept grass and quite a different style to New Zealand. Photo: Geoffrey Marshall.

New Zealand. Horticultural 'waste' such as tree pruning's was piled up in some places perhaps providing habitats for insects and animals. The range of trees planted was interesting with hardy trees from all continents being used.

In New Zealand we were/are horticulturally brought up with a Victorian view of horticulture where plants and landscape were under control with regular pruning, weeding, mown grass and the like. Europe is not like this.

Biodiversity has long been promoted by King Charles III especially when he was Prince of Wales. He sought the preservation of hedgerows and other environments as places for plants, animals, birds and insects to live and survive. This movement has grown extensively in Europe, and more so than here in New Zealand.

Management of horticulture in Europe appears to be less rigorous but behind the scenes the management of biodiversity (all living things) may be more intense than we see in New Zealand.

In urban areas where there are horticultural plantings, e.g., roadsides, there seems to be a good variety of plants, but I wonder about using closer planting distances to achieve a denser coverage of the ground to prevent unwanted plants growing there?

The climate is tougher in most of Europe with colder winters and hotter summers, and this plays a part in the management of open spaces and the choice of plants.

Overall people were still using the parks and open spaces and visiting garden areas in large numbers.

Here in New Zealand, to match the intensity and amenity of biodiversity as seen in Europe, it would be difficult to gain widespread acceptance without a higher degree of horticultural management, public education, and careful planning. Here there is a greater emphasis on our native flora and biodiversity due to its unique status and New Zealand's position as an island nation.

We can learn from overseas experience and couple that with Kiwi expertise to further increase our biodiversity, move away from the Victorian gardening influences and develop a New Zealand landscape with our native species and the best of introduced species.

In late April we held our Annual General Meeting online which was attended by a small number of members. Thank you. The National Executive remains the same, but without Penny Cliflin who chose not to stand for election as she now chairs another horticultural organisation. Thanks go out to Penny for being on the National Executive for more than 12 years.

During the year we will be approaching people who may like to join the National Executive, but

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if there is anyone interested, please contact me or email the office at: [office@rnzih.org.nz](mailto:office@rnzih.org.nz).

After the AGM there was an open invite for anyone interested in a talk on NZ Mistletoe. Several non-members joined which was great. Murray Dawson recorded this online talk and edited it for our Facebook page and a new YouTube channel, along with our first video of the Banks Memorial Lecture (see details below).

Let us know what future topics you might like presented online to provide interesting content for our new media channels.

**Alan Jolliffe**  
President, RNZIH

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## RNZIH lectures now on Facebook and YouTube

We have uploaded our first video presentations on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/RNZIH/videos](https://www.facebook.com/RNZIH/videos)) and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/@RNZIH-NZ](https://www.youtube.com/@RNZIH-NZ)).

This represents the beginnings of what we hope to be a series of online presentations by the RNZIH, as outreach to a wider horticultural community.

### 2025 Banks Memorial Lecture: 'The Importance of Plants in Connecting People and Wildlife'



Our first video is of Prof Margaret Stanley delivering the Banks Memorial Lecture at the RNZIH evening, ANZ Centre in Auckland, on Friday 4th April 2025. A short version of her abstract reads:

*Urban forests are a vital part of city landscapes but face growing threats. Our understanding of their value to people and biodiversity remains limited. Studies show links between nature and human physical and mental health, highlighting the importance of urban biodiversity. Planting locally adapted species provides co-benefits – supporting native biodiversity, reconnecting urban Māori with cultural practices and language, and fostering a unique sense of place. Urban forests are more than scattered trees; birds and other wildlife rely on layered vegetation and connected habitat corridors. In this lecture, Prof Stanley discusses how to create connectivity by identifying key gaps and corridors, and by designing multifunctional spaces that benefit both people and nature.*

### 'NZ Mistletoe – species and diversity'



Our second online video was presented by our President, Alan Jolliffe, following the RNZIH virtual AGM on 29th April 2025. Alan's abstract reads:

*Aotearoa New Zealand has nine species of endemic mistletoe; eight can be found in the wild and one species is extinct. Three species are known as the beech mistletoe; some are generally host specific and two are known to have a range of hosts. All are hemiparasitic, meaning that although the roots are parasitic, they have green parts or leaves which produce sugars through photosynthesis. This presentation is a short introduction to all the species.*

Although attendance that evening was modest,



Alan received many positive comments on his interesting and well-illustrated talk. Releasing it on Facebook and especially YouTube makes it more widely available.

Both were excellent presentations – please take the time to look them up.

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## Congratulations

### John Barkla awarded Loder Cup for outstanding contributions to native plant conservation



Department of Conservation Director-General Penny Nelson presenting the Loder Cup to John Barkla. Photo: DOC.

Long-time botanist and conservationist John Barkla has been honoured with the 2024 Loder Cup, one of New Zealand's oldest and most prestigious conservation awards. The award, presented 12 December 2024 in Dunedin by Department of Conservation (DOC) Director-General Penny Nelson, recognises John's decades of dedication to protecting and promoting Aotearoa's native flora.

John was nominated by the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network (NZPCN), with strong support from botanical societies, conservation boards, universities, and researchers. His contributions span over 30 years with DOC, in both Whanganui and Otago, and continue through his volunteer work. He has been an active member of the NZPCN – serving three years as President – and a dedicated member

of the Botanical Society of Otago for more than two decades.

A highly respected field botanist, John remains involved in threatened plant conservation in Otago and contributes his expertise to the New Zealand Threat Classification System. His recent discoveries include a new population of *Craspedia* 'Cape Saunders' and the rediscovery of rare species like *Veronica lilliputiana*, *Myosotis rakiura*, and *Solenogyne christensenii* – the only known population of which was found near Lake Wanaka.

His efforts have improved understanding of propagation techniques for the Nationally Vulnerable *Olearia hectorii*, and he continues to share his botanical knowledge generously. John has collected over 700 herbarium specimens held in seven institutions, and contributed almost 30,000 citizen science observations, and helped verify nearly 100,000 identifications on the iNaturalist platform.

With more than four decades of service – both professional and voluntary – John Barkla's impact on native plant conservation has been profound. The Loder Cup is a fitting recognition of his lifelong commitment to New Zealand's unique botanical heritage.

For more details, read the press release at [www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2024-media-releases/legendary-conservationist-wins-award-for-decades-of-work-protecting-plants/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2024-media-releases/legendary-conservationist-wins-award-for-decades-of-work-protecting-plants/)

### Eric Appleton: Honorary Membership to IPPS New Zealand

Congratulations to Eric Appleton for his Honorary Membership to International Plant Propagators' New Zealand Region (IPPS-NZ) in late 2024.

This recognition acknowledges Eric's outstanding contributions to horticulture and his unwavering support of IPPS since joining in 1982.

Eric's horticultural journey began in England, where he gained forestry training before



Ian Williams of Wakefield presenting the IPPS-NZ Honorary Membership to Eric Appleton.  
Photo: IPPS-NZ.

emigrating to New Zealand in 1956. Upon arrival, he worked with the New Zealand Forest Service and the Forest Research Institute, primarily in the South Island. In 1968, he established Appleton's Tree Nursery in Wakefield, which has since become one of New Zealand's premier tree nurseries, producing over 150 million trees and significantly contributing to the country's forestry industry.

Throughout his career, Eric has generously shared his knowledge. He has hosted numerous IPPS conferences and field trips at Appleton's Nursery, often providing practical demonstrations and insights.

In recognition of his service, Eric received the IPPS NZ Region's Award of Merit in 2015, the highest accolade for meritorious service to horticulture in the region.

Beyond IPPS, Eric's influence extends to the wider horticultural and forestry sectors. In 2022, he was appointed Patron of the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association,

reflecting his enduring commitment to sustainable forestry practices.

Congratulations, Eric, on this well-deserved honour.

### **Rachael Chalmers: Life Membership of the New Zealand Rose Society**



Rachael with NZRS President Hayden Foulds.  
Photo: Sheree Gare.

Congratulations to Rachael Chalmers, who was awarded Life Membership of the New Zealand Rose Society (NZRS) at the South Island Rose Ranfurly event in Rangiora in February 2024. This honour recognises her outstanding service and dedication to the Society and the wider rose community.

Rachael first joined the Southland Rose Society in 2005, holding several positions until moving to Dunedin in 2013. In 2011, she took on the role of editor for the *New Zealand Rose Annual*, serving until 2018.

Rachael's contributions continued as she remained on the NZRS Council for an additional year and later served as NZRS Secretary from 2022 to 2024. She embraced the role of Show Secretary for the National Rose Shows in 2023 and 2024, despite not having previously held this position. Her active participation in South Island Ranfurly weekends and numerous National Rose Shows underscores her tireless support for the Society's events.

Throughout her involvement with the rose community, Rachael has been supported by her family, especially her husband Stephen, whose

encouragement has been invaluable. Her dedication and contributions have left a lasting impact on the NZRS, making her Life Membership a well-deserved recognition of her service.

#### **Lyn Anisy: recipient of the 2025 Frank Penn Memorial Award**



Lyn with NZRS President Hayden Foulds.  
Photo: Sheree Gare.

Congratulations to Lyn Anisy of the Westland Rose Society on receiving the 2025 Frank Penn Memorial Award. Presented annually by the New Zealand Rose Society, this award honours exceptional service at the local level, and Lyn is a most deserving recipient.

Lyn has been a dedicated member of the Westland Rose Society for 28 years, serving on the committee throughout and as Secretary for the past eight years. In recognition of her unwavering commitment, she was awarded Life Membership of the Westland society in 2024.

A tireless fundraiser, Lyn contributes significantly to the society's financial health.

In 2010, Lyn took on the significant role of convenor for the National Autumn Rose Show. Her family's involvement in this event highlights the collective dedication they bring to the rose community.

Lyn's energy, dedication, sense of humour, and generous contribution of time have left an indelible mark on the Westland Rose Society. Her recognition with the Frank Penn Memorial Award is a testament to her outstanding commitment to the local rose community.

#### **Hayden Foulds: recipient of the 2025 World Rose Award**



Hayden Foulds receiving his 2025 World Rose Award from Diane Vom Berg, WFRS President (2022–2025).  
Photo: Melanie Trimper.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Hayden Foulds, who was honoured with the prestigious World Rose Award at the closing ceremony of the 20th World Rose Convention in Fukuyama, Japan, on 24th May 2025. This award, presented by the World Federation of Rose Societies (WFRS), recognises individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the promotion and appreciation of roses worldwide. While at the convention, Hayden was also elected as one of the two Vice Presidents representing Australasia on the World Federation of Rose Societies.

Hayden's dedication to the world of roses spans several decades, during which he has significantly influenced both national and international rose communities. In New Zealand, he has served as the President of the New Zealand Rose Society (NZRS), and fulfils roles as the editor of the *New Zealand Rose Review* and webmaster for the NZRS website. His leadership extends to coordinating the NZRS trial grounds in Palmerston North, where he collates annual scores and promotes award-winning roses both domestically and internationally.

Internationally, Hayden is a member of the publications committee and the social media subcommittee. His commitment to sharing knowledge is evident through his numerous articles and lectures, including his recent presentation on improving disease tolerance in roses at the Fukuyama convention.



Beyond his administrative and educational roles, Hayden is a passionate rosarian who has travelled extensively to participate in rose conventions across the globe, including in Australia, Canada, South Africa, France, and China. His efforts have not only advanced the cultivation and appreciation of roses but have also fostered international collaboration within the rose-growing community.

Hayden's receipt of the World Rose Award is a testament to his dedication, extensive knowledge, and influential presence in the world of roses. We join the global rose community in celebrating his achievements and look forward to his continued contributions to the art and science of rose cultivation.

*Note: The World Rose Award is one of the highest honours bestowed by the WFRS, recognising individuals who have rendered outstanding service to the rose.*

#### **Dr Keith Hammett Sweet Peas take centre stage at Chelsea**



Sweet Pea display at the Chelsea flower Show.  
Photo: [www.facebook.com/drkeithhammett](https://www.facebook.com/drkeithhammett)

Dr Keith Hammett's Sweet Peas continue to attract international attention.

Five of Keith's cultivars were staged by grower and fellow breeder Phil Johnson in his Gold Medal winning display at this year's Chelsea Flower Show in London.

*Lathyrus × hammettii* 'Shell Pink' was centre stage. Phil said to reporters "We think this will be the next big thing."

Congratulations Keith, for all your successes in breeding such remarkable ornamental plants and making them available for the world to enjoy.

#### **Celebrating Vance Hooper: internationally acclaimed *Magnolia* breeder**



**Top:** Vance Hooper holding his four-legged companion Kate. **Bottom:** the RHS Jim Gardiner Magnolia Cup. Photos: [www.facebook.com/vance.hooper.9](https://www.facebook.com/vance.hooper.9)



Renowned New Zealand magnolia breeder Vance Hooper, owner of Magnolia Grove in Waitara, continues to receive top international recognition for his exceptional contributions to horticulture.

In February 2025, Vance was honoured with the Jim Gardiner Magnolia Cup by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in the United Kingdom. This prestigious award acknowledges individuals who have significantly promoted or increased knowledge of the genus *Magnolia*. Vance's innovative breeding efforts have focused on developing magnolia cultivars with strong bloom colouration, floriferousness, vigour, health, and compact habit, making them well-suited for smaller suburban gardens.

Among his notable creations is *Magnolia* 'Genie', a compact tree producing tulip-shaped, burgundy-red flowers over an extended blooming period. After 15 years of dedicated breeding, 'Genie' has become one of Vance's most celebrated cultivars, earning a Gold Medal from the Royal Boskoop Horticultural Society (KVBC) in the Netherlands. In 2023, 'Genie' was also selected for inclusion in the King's Coronation Collection, further cementing its status as a standout cultivar.

Vance's other remarkable magnolia introductions include 'Watermelon', 'Emperor', 'Pink Pyramid', 'Cameo', and 'Margaret Helen' – the latter named in honour of his mother. Each of these cultivars showcases unique characteristics, such as vibrant flower colours, compact growth habits, and extended blooming periods, contributing to their popularity among gardeners worldwide.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to horticulture, Vance was awarded the Reginald Cory Memorial Cup by the RHS in 2024. This award honours individuals who have made significant advancements in the field of horticulture.

Beyond his breeding achievements, Vance actively shares his expertise through workshops and lectures. He has presented at international symposiums, including the Magnolia Society

International's virtual symposium, where he discussed magnolia breeding in New Zealand. Additionally, Vance and his wife Kathryn open their garden, Magnolia Grove, to the public during events like the Taranaki Garden Festival, offering visitors a chance to explore their extensive collection of magnolias and other unique plants.

Vance Hooper's dedication to magnolia breeding has not only enriched gardens across New Zealand but has also left a lasting impact on the global horticultural community.

### **Titahi Bay Horticultural Society encouraging and supporting young gardeners**



Titahi Bay Horticultural Society running a posy bowl making activity for Mothers Day at Bunnings. Photo: [www.facebook.com/TitahiBayHorticulturalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/TitahiBayHorticulturalSociety)

Recognising the importance of encouraging the next generation of gardeners, the Titahi Bay Horticultural Society is very active in the local community, initiating and supporting activities which encourage children to experience the joy of gardening. For some years the Society has run a 'Great Daffodil Grow and Show' programme for local schools in which the Society donates bulbs, potting mix and



containers and the schools show their daffodil blooms at the Society's Spring show. Another popular annual event is the 'Gardener of the Year' competition at decile one Cannons Creek School where the winner receives a cup and a certificate. The Society regularly hosts stalls at community events where children can pot plants for free and on Mother's Day have a stand at Bunnings where plants for mum (donated by Bunnings) can be worked into a posy bowl. At their spring show they have a children's floral art competition and participating schools show their daffodils.

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## Botanical sanctuary gifted to Auckland



Aerial view of the donated Platt property in Greenhithe, Auckland. Photo: Auckland Council.

In March 2025, Auckland received an extraordinary gift: a 5.63-hectare botanical sanctuary in Greenhithe, generously donated by philanthropist Rosemary Platt in memory of her late husband, renowned plantsman Graeme Platt.

This ecologically significant land, newly protected as a regional park, features one of the country's most diverse collections of native and Gondwanan trees, including a forest grown from seeds of Tāne Mahuta, New Zealand's largest living kauri tree.

Graeme Platt (1941–2021) was a remarkable, perhaps unconventional, New Zealand plantsman. Born in Massey, West Auckland, his passion for plants was evident from a young age. Despite facing challenges with undiagnosed dyslexia, he developed a deep

knowledge of native flora and a commitment to conservation. In the early 1970s, he and Rosemary established Platt's Native Plant Nursery in Albany, which became a leading source of native plants for Auckland and beyond.

Graeme's contributions extended to the Auckland Botanic Gardens, where he donated numerous rare plants and provided valuable horticultural advice. His efforts were recognised with the Plant Raiser's Award from the RNZIH in 2011.

The newly established regional park at 81 Kyle Road, Greenhithe, stands as a living tribute to Graeme's legacy. Auckland Council, in partnership with local iwi Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei, plans to develop the site in line with the Auckland Botanic Gardens Management Plan, ensuring public access and ongoing preservation of its unique botanical heritage.

This generous bequest not only honours Graeme Platt's lifelong dedication to ecology, botany and horticulture, but also provides a lasting gift for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

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## Notable retirements

As mentioned in our last newsletter, the first half of 2025 has seen a flush of retirements of well-known notable botanic garden, parks and recreation managers. We thank the following for their exceptional service to horticulture in New Zealand spanning many decades.

### Jack Hobbs retires after 48 years at Auckland Botanic Gardens

Jack Hobbs, one of New Zealand's most well-known horticulturists, has officially retired (24th April 2025) after an extraordinary 48-year career with the Auckland Botanic Gardens and Auckland Council.

Jack began his journey in the 1970s, joining the then-fledgling Auckland Botanic Gardens project as a young landscape trainee. Over the



Jack Hobbs with a community group at Auckland Botanic Gardens. Photo: Auckland Council.

decades, he helped transform bare farmland in Manurewa into a nationally significant botanical institution. Appointed curator and manager in 1997, Jack played a key role in the gardens' expansion, public engagement, and scientific credibility.

A passionate plantsman, Jack led the Botanic Gardens' plant breeding programme for 20 years. His work focused on selecting and developing cultivars that were both beautiful and resilient – his breeding efforts contributed to the refinement and promotion of native plants and tough, low-maintenance ornamentals.

Beyond the gardens, Jack became a household name through his regular appearances on *Maggie's Garden Show*, an iconic New Zealand television programme that ran throughout the 1990s. His calm presence and depth of knowledge helped popularise gardening and brought the Auckland Botanic Gardens into the public eye. He later extended his reach as a gardening commentator on radio and in print, encouraging New Zealanders to engage with plants and green spaces.

In recognition of his service, the Auckland Council formally acknowledged his retirement

in 2025, expressing gratitude for his vision, leadership, and dedication to public horticulture. Jack also held leadership roles in the wider horticultural community, serving as President of the RNZIH from 2003 to 2012, and receiving numerous awards, including their Plant Raisers' Award (1990), Fellowship (1992), Associate of Honour (1996), and the Horticultural Communicator Award (2022).

As Jack Hobbs steps into retirement, his work continues to blossom – in every corner of the Auckland Botanic Gardens, in countless home gardens, and in the lives of those he inspired with his lifelong belief that “plants are good for us.”

### David Sole retires after 21 years leading Wellington Botanic Garden



David Sole, handing his work boots across to Bec Ramsey. Photo: Wellington Botanic Garden.

On 31 January 2025, David Sole retired after 21 years as General Manager of Wellington Botanic Garden, concluding a career that has significantly shaped the capital's green spaces. Appointed in 2003, David oversaw the Wellington Botanic Garden, Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, Truby King Park, and Bolton Street Cemetery, leaving a lasting legacy in public horticulture and conservation.

Before his management of Wellington Botanic Garden, David began his career as a



horticultural apprentice with the Wellington City Council, gaining hands-on experience in various aspects of park and garden management. His dedication and expertise led him to roles such as Parks and Recreation Manager at the Lower Hutt City Council and later as Manager of Parks and Recreation at the Wellington City Council. These positions allowed him to influence urban green space development and community engagement significantly.

Under his leadership at Wellington Botanic Garden, the gardens underwent transformative developments. Notably, he spearheaded the redevelopment of Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, including the establishment of the Lions Ōtari Plant Conservation Laboratory, focusing on seed banking and the preservation of native flora. The 2010 Landscape Development Plan modernised plant displays, emphasising ecological communities over traditional taxonomic arrangements. David also led the refurbishment of the Leonard Cockayne Centre, enhancing public engagement and education.

His contributions extended beyond the gardens. As a member of the RNZIH National Executive from 2005, he served as Chairman and then President from 2006 to 2013. In recognition of his service, he was awarded the Fellowship (1996) and later became an Associate of Honour (2018) of the RNZIH.

Following David's retirement, Wellington Gardens welcomed Bec Ramsay as the new manager. Ramsay brings a fresh perspective to the role, aiming to continue the legacy of excellence in horticulture and public engagement established by her predecessor. She expressed enthusiasm about leading the gardens into their next chapter, focusing on sustainability, community involvement, and the continued celebration of New Zealand's unique botanical heritage.

In retirement, David continues to advocate for conservation, horticulture and community engagement.

## **Bill Steans to retire after 38 years of service at Timaru District Council**



Bill Steans, set to retire after 38 years of service.

On 27 June 2025, Bill Steans will retire after 38 years as Parks and Recreation Manager at Timaru District Council, marking the end of a distinguished career dedicated to horticulture and public service.

After early roles in Gore and Christchurch, Bill joined Timaru City Council in 1987 and was appointed Director of Parks and Recreation for the newly formed Timaru District Council in 1989. For more than three decades, he has overseen major improvements across the district's green spaces – including the redevelopment of Caroline Bay, native revegetation of walkways, extensive CBD plantings in four towns, and the revitalisation of the Timaru Botanic Gardens.

Both the Timaru Botanic Gardens and the Trevor Griffiths Rose Garden, two of the district's most iconic public spaces, have earned 5-star status from the NZ Gardens Trust, a testament to their outstanding design, maintenance, and visitor experience.

The Timaru Botanic Gardens, established in 1864, span over 19 hectares and feature a wide variety of plant collections, mature trees,



formal bedding displays, and heritage structures. Under Bill's leadership, the Gardens saw the restoration of key features, the introduction of interpretive signage, and a strong commitment to plant conservation and public engagement.

The Trevor Griffiths Rose Garden, located on Caroline Bay, showcases more than 1,200 rose varieties, including rare heritage types and modern cultivars. Bill was instrumental in securing and showcasing the Griffiths heritage rose collection, with the garden receiving the Award of Garden Excellence from the World Federation of Rose Societies in 2012.

In recognition of his career achievements, Bill is a Fellow of both the RNZIH (FRIH) and the NZ Institute of Park and Recreation Administration. He has contributed nationally through the New Zealand Parks Leaders Forum, and internationally with the World Urban Parks Association.

As the community prepares to farewell Bill, his legacy will live on in the trees, plantings, and public spaces that have flourished under his care.

#### **Alan Matchett retires after 43 years at Dunedin Botanic Garden**



Alan Matchett. Photo: Dunedin Botanic Garden.

Alan Matchett retired 31 January 2025 after a 43-year career with the Dunedin City Council, most notably as Manager of the Dunedin Botanic Garden. His decades of leadership and horticultural expertise have left a lasting legacy in New Zealand's oldest botanical garden.

Alan began working with the council in 1980, completing an apprenticeship that included experience across city parks and the Winter Garden. He went on to become leading hand at the Rhododendron Dell and upper gardens foreman under then-curator Mick Reece. From early on, Alan demonstrated both practical skill and a passion for the long-term development of the garden.

He played a major role in the garden's transformation through the late 1980s, when realignment of State Highway 1 required relocation of key features such as the aviary and rose garden. In the years that followed, Alan oversaw a wide range of projects including the creation of the Clive Lister Garden, restoration and later refurbishment of the historic Winter Garden glasshouse, redevelopment of the garden's main entrance, and the establishment of the Mediterranean and Southern African plant collections. The opening of the new Propagation House in 2015 was another milestone under his leadership.

Alan also managed Dunedin's cemeteries for 11 years, including development of the city's new facility at Concord.

He was instrumental in bringing the prestigious International Botanic Gardens Congress to Dunedin in 2013 and delivering the RNZIH Banks Memorial Lecture 'The History of Botanic Gardens in New Zealand'.

Under his stewardship, the garden maintained its six-star Garden of International Significance rating with the NZ Gardens Trust and was internationally recognised for its Camellia collection by the International Camellia Society.

In recognition of his outstanding service to horticulture, Alan was awarded the Fellowship (FRIH) of the RNZIH in 2022.

As he enters retirement, Alan looks forward to spending more time on his rural property near Trotters Gorge. He leaves behind an institution that will continue to flourish thanks to his decades of care.

Catherine Bradley has succeeded Alan as the new manager of Dunedin Botanic Garden, supported by horticultural collections supervisor Dylan Norfield.

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## NZ Gardens Trust 2025 Conference Report ‘Diversity of Possibilities’ – Auckland, 3–6 April 2025

The 2025 NZGT Conference, themed ‘Diversity of Possibilities’, brought together garden owners, horticulturists, and plant enthusiasts for four inspiring days in Auckland. Despite challenging weather, the conference delivered rich experiences, meaningful networking, and plenty of garden-based inspiration.

### Thursday 3 April – Gibbs Farm and Mincher Garden



Dramatic sculpture at Gibbs Farm.  
Photo: Dylan Norfield.

The conference began with a visit to the world-renowned **Gibbs Farm**, a private sculpture park set in rolling hills north of Auckland. Although



Auckland BG staff admiring a sculpture at Gibbs Farm. Photo: Dylan Norfield.

the weather brought a cold, wet southerly, attendees spent four invigorating hours exploring awe-inspiring, large-scale sculptures and connecting with fellow garden owners.



Pleached and arched pear trees at Mincher Garden. Photo: Dylan Norfield.

The evening's events took place at **Mincher Garden**, where attendees enjoyed the official conference welcome and the ever-popular plant auction. A diverse selection of plants sourced from across the country was on offer. Attendees also had the chance to admire the garden and catch up with friends. Meanwhile, NZGT assessors carried out a mock assessment to help maintain consistency in evaluation across the team.

### Friday 4 April – Garden Visits and RNZIH Evening



In the rain at Brick Bay. Photo: Dylan Norfield.

The second day featured visits to **Omaio, Barclay's, Matanaka Botanicals**, and **Brick Bay**. While the weather continued to challenge, the enthusiasm of the gardening community was undampened. Conversations flourished around planting ideas, design, and sustainability.



Awardees alongside President Alan Jolliffe at the RNZIH evening.  
Photos: Liz Morrow.



Lynda Hallinan,  
Horticultural Communicator.



Dr Clare Gleeson,  
Garden History Award.



Dave Adams, Plant Raiser.



June Lincoln, FRIH.



Wendy Palmer, FRIH.



Des Snell, AHRH for 2024.



Sue Wickison, AHRH.



Megan Parker, AHRH.



Mike Wilcox, AHRH.





Banks Lecturer Margaret Stanley.  
Photo: Murray Dawson.

The evening was hosted by the RNZIH. Attendees connected with the RNZIH executive and celebrated the **Awards Presentations**, where most of the 2025 awardees (and one 2024 awardee) were there in person.

This was followed by the **Banks Memorial Lecture** delivered by Professor Margaret Stanley. Her talk explored the growing disconnection between people and nature in modern cities and the importance of restoring those links.

### Saturday 5 April – Innovative and Inspirational Gardens

Five inspiring gardens were visited: **Marshall Garden, The Urban Jungle, Jacob Garden, Hollingsworth Garden, and Auckland Domain**. Personal highlights included:

- **Jacob Garden**, featuring a 100-metre-long lava tube cave that visitors could walk through, passing beneath the garden and neighbouring houses.
- **The Urban Jungle**, where Mark and Gene are transforming public berms and parks into 'sponge gardens' using community-sourced green waste. Their work showcases how gardens can mitigate climate events and build community



Wolfgang Bopp about to enter lava tube at Jacob Garden. Photo: Dylan Norfield.

resilience. The energy and commitment of the project – and the volunteers supporting it – left a lasting impression.

### Sunday 6 April – Lectures and Meeting

The final day featured two standout presentations. **Robyn Simcock** gave a compelling talk titled '*Gardening Above the Ground: A Diversity of Possibilities*', highlighting her two decades of experience with resilient green roofs. Her insights offered practical takeaways for future-focused gardening. Photographer **Juliet Nicholas** followed with '*Garden Photography – Observations and Considerations*'. With over 30 years' experience capturing gardens around New Zealand, Juliet inspired attendees to see gardens from new angles and experiment with photography techniques.

The day concluded with a slideshow of photos taken by participants throughout the conference, followed by the New Zealand Gardens Trust Annual Meeting.

### Summary

Over four days, the conference offered a wealth of inspiration, knowledge-sharing, and camaraderie. Visiting gardens, hearing from passionate speakers, and engaging in open dialogue left attendees energised and full of ideas. As always, the greatest value lay in the connections – reconnecting with old friends and forging new relationships across the gardening community.

**Dylan Norfield**



Mark and Gene explaining the concept at Urban Jungle. Photo: Dylan Norfield.

## RNZIH Education Trust: Chairman's Report

Another busy year has been completed by the RNZIH Education Trust with success for all the finalists. Sponsorship is still our biggest challenge following on from 2022 and 2023. Funds need to be carefully managed as we navigate these difficult times. At year end we were left with a final cash position of \$78,139.34.

A net deficit of \$12,686.70 was posted but deemed necessary to deliver a competition of a high standard.

Overall sponsorship income was up, and the money spent on the competition was down. The reason for the deficit was low grant numbers and relatively low-ticket sales.

2024 saw the start of our new Event and Sponsorship Manager Shona Willis. She has a wealth of experience with charities and has come up with fresh ideas that we have been

able to incorporate into the competition and enable us to make savings without compromising the product.

At last year's AGM the current Chairman Hamish Gates stepped down and Shaun Trevan was appointed new Chair. We appointed a new Trust member Martina Balasova from PITO who has great connections with young people in horticulture.

We are looking forward to the 2025 competition which will be our 20th year and all the challenges that come with it. We are focusing strongly on generating more revenue and delivering a positive budget.

The trust extends a sincere thank you to all the sponsors and supporters of the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition.

**Shaun Trevan**  
Chairman, NZET



The RNZIH Education Trust at their annual strategic planning day at the Auckland Botanic Gardens. From left to right: Craig Hart, outgoing Trustee (Yieldia), Claudia Knarston (Auckland Irrigation), Jo Woolley, Vice Chair (Mayfield Group), Ingrid Ennis (Terra Nova Seeds), Nicola Rochester (ICL), Martina Balasova (Primary ITO), Shaun Trevan, Chair (Cornwall Park), Jeni Rowney, Treasurer, (Tommy & Co), Shona Willis, Event & Sponsorship Manager.



# tree of the year

## rākau o te tau

### NEW ZEALAND

## Voting Opens for the 2025 New Zealand Tree of the Year

Tree of the Year NZ 2025 has launched, and invites the public to vote for their favourite from a shortlist of six remarkable trees across the country. Run by the NZ Notable Trees Trust, Tree of the Year is a celebration of the iconic trees that shape our landscapes, memories, and communities.

Sponsored by Delta Utility Services and supported by the NZ Arboricultural Association, the competition shares stories of trees that hold cultural, historical, and personal significance – drawing inspiration from the long-running European Tree of the Year.

During May, New Zealanders were encouraged to nominate a single tree that holds special meaning – not a whole species, but one tree with a unique story. The aim? To highlight the deep-rooted connections we share with these living treasures.

Brad Cadwallader, Trustee of the NZ Notable Trees Trust, says the heart of the competition lies in community engagement.

*“These trees are part of our shared story – they hold our memories, mark our histories, and shape our landscapes. Tree of the Year is about celebrating that connection and recognising the guardians who care for them.”*

**Voting opens 5 June at and closes midnight 30 June. The 2025 winner will be announced on 5 July.**

Visit the website to learn about each finalist and vote for your favourite:  
[www.treeoftheyear.co.nz](http://www.treeoftheyear.co.nz)

This year’s finalists include:

- **The Fairy Tree, Auckland Domain** – some places stay with us long after we’ve left them.
- **The Phantom Rātā, Lake Ōkātina** – some spirits are rooted deep in the land.
- **The Greytown Gum** – where history and mischief intertwine.
- **Rangiora Borough School Redwood** – some trees help shape who we become.
- **The Chook Tree, Waianakarua, Otago** – some trees remind us not to take life too seriously.
- **Te Herenga Ora, Burnside High School, Christchurch** – some paths deserve to be remembered.

**Brad Cadwallader**  
**Administrator | NZ Notable Trees Trust**  
**Email: [notabletrees@rnzih.org.nz](mailto:notabletrees@rnzih.org.nz)**



**The Fairy Tree**



**Rangiora Redwood**



**The Phantom Rātā**



**The Chook Tree**



**The Greytown Gum**



**Te Herenga Ora**







# Botanical Art Worldwide 2025

Our Plants - Past, Present and Future  
O Tātou Tipu o Mua - o Ināianeī me te Āpōpō

*'Linking People to Plants through Botanical Art'*

Botanical Drawing: Emma Scheltema

## EXHIBITION DATES & VENUES

### AUCKLAND BOTANIC GARDENS

29th March - 29th June 2025

### WELLINGTON BOTANIC GARDENS

1st August - 30th September 2025

### ASHBURTON ART GALLERY

18th October - 7th December 2025

more information here:

<https://www.botanicalartnz.org/baww25-new-zealand>



Absolutely Positively  
Wellington City Council  
We're here to help!



## New members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Nick Yoong	Auckland
Jennifer Horner (rejoined)	Hawera
Bernize Butters	Ashburton
Danica Davies	Dunedin
Kate Moss-Mason	Dunedin

## 2025 membership fees

There are nearly 30 RNZIH members with outstanding subscriptions for this year.

Please help support the activities of the Institute and renew!



ROYAL NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE  
PO Box 85012, Lincoln University, Lincoln 7647, NZ

