



ROYAL NEW ZEALAND
INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE

Newsletter

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Editor's Comments



IPPS-NZ 'Southern Challenge' conference: field trip to the Dunedin Botanic Garden, 1st May 2026

Partnering with the International Plant Production Society – New Zealand (IPPS–NZ) Region for their 2026 conference in Dunedin proved a great success. Later in this Newsletter, I've included some photos of our time together.

We were made very welcome and the nursery field trips and talks were fascinating. The dedicated RNZIH session on Sunday afternoon (3rd May) also went well. All (but two) of the awardees, and their families, were able to attend their presentations which felt warm and personal. Afterwards, Prof Janice Lord of the University of Otago delivered an excellent Banks Memorial Lecture, on insights and knowledge gaps in the pollination of native plants. Janice's lecture has been written up for our journal, as well as the full awardee citations.

It's interesting to reflect back over the years. We last joined an IPPS-NZ conference in 2018, held in Palmerston North. In the intervening years, we have mostly partnered with the NZ Gardens Trust (NZGT), which was established by the RNZIH in 2004 – and of course, many of our members have their gardens listed by the NZGT. Before then, and bolstered by a larger membership, we mainly held our own dedicated conferences and symposia. Another partnership over the years has been with NZArb (the New Zealand Arboricultural Association), whose origins are closely tied to the RNZIH. It's also a privilege to celebrate events with the RNZIH Education Trust, and a few of us have been lucky enough to attend or contribute to their acclaimed Young Horticulturist of the Year competition and grand finals.

It's really important to maintain and foster healthy connections with like-minded and allied organisations. We are all involved in various facets of horticulture, and New Zealand is simply too small to be isolationist within our own borders. With aging and declining memberships, it's sad to see in recent decades the demise of many traditional plant clubs and societies. To keep their knowledge alive, on the RNZIH website we have archived the journals of the now defunct Subtropicals Society (2002–2006), the Wellington Hoya and Epiphytic Plant Society (1992–2011), and the NZ Clivia Club (2003–2015). However, this is a 'drop in the bucket' of lost resources. Many more clubs and societies have fallen by the wayside, or at best morphed into online groups such as on Facebook.

In the quarter of a century plus that I've been actively involved in the running of the RNZIH, 2020 was the only year I can recall when we failed to offer some form of in-person conference, due of course to COVID19. The pandemic led to mainstream adoption of videoconferencing and the RNZIH has been no exception. We have held a couple of AGMs and a Special Meeting by videoconference, and it was great to see that we are achieving quorums – thanks so much for your support towards this administrative side to the functioning of the Institute.

And not forgetting the stories of the plants themselves, we are making our various horticultural presentations available to all, by recording them and uploading to our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@RNZIH-NZ). Although it's a modest start, we hope interest in our videos will grow in the future.

As I write this, it's National Volunteer Week in New Zealand (14–20th June 2026). It's true that the RNZIH, and its affiliated trusts, could not operate without the voluntary effort of many. The theme of National Volunteer Week is 'Your Year to Volunteer' – please let us know if you do wish to volunteer some of your time to our Institute!

Murray Dawson
RNZIH editor and webmaster

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Congratulations

Jack Hobbs becomes a Member of the NZ Order of Merit (MNZM)



Jack Hobbs AHRIH, MNZM.

Congratulations to Jack Hobbs for becoming a Member of the NZ Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to horticulture in the 2026 New Years Honours. Jack's citation (at www.dpmc.govt.nz/honours/lists/ny2026-mnzm) reads:

"Mr Jack Hobbs is an award-winning horticulturist and plant breeder who worked at the Auckland Botanic Gardens from 1977 to 2025. Mr Hobbs was the first to undertake systematic breeding of New Zealand native plants in 1982, winning the Plant Raisers' Award from the RNZIH in 1990. He was elected as Associate of Honour of the RNZIH in 1996. He was Manager of the Auckland Botanic Gardens from 1997 until retiring in 2025. During his tenure, the gardens have been recognised with national and international awards, including a Garden of National Significance Five-Star rating, International Camellia Garden of Excellence, and the 2017 Qualmark Gold Sustainable Tourism Award. With his support, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens have amassed assets of more than \$1 million, significantly aiding activities such as the biennial Sculpture in the Gardens. Since 1989 he has written around 100 articles for New Zealand Gardener, written and co-written books, and hosted radio and television programmes. He has presented many lectures, including the prestigious Banks Memorial Lecture in 2000, all illustrated by his photographs. He served as RNZIH's President from 2001 to 2011 and won the 2022 RNZIH's inaugural Horticultural Communicator Award. In 2023 Mr Hobbs received the Award of Merit from the International Plant Propagators' Society."

Sculpture Park at Waitakaruru Arboretum celebrates national and international honours



Plants and sculpture, a signature of the Sculpture Park at Waitakaruru Arboretum.

Photo: © www.sculpturepark.co.nz.

The park has attained a Five-Star rating as a Garden of National Significance (www.gardens.org.nz/visit/sculpture), placing it among New Zealand's most outstanding gardens. This rating acknowledges excellence in design, plant collections, and the distinctive experience the park offers visitors with its art-in-nature trail. The NZ Gardens Trust judges recognised the significant transformation of the quarry site over the past 34 years.

In January 2026, the Arboretum also received an international accreditation as an Arboretum of International Standing with Grade II status reflecting internationally recognised standards in tree conservation, collection management, education, and long-term stewardship (<https://arbnet.org/morton-register/waitakaruru-arboretum/>).

The Garden of National Significance award celebrates the arboretum's contribution to New Zealand's cultural and horticultural heritage, while the international arboretum accreditation confirms its role within a global community committed to the preservation and celebration of trees.

Together, the two honours mark an important milestone in the life of the arboretum. What began as a vision for rehabilitating a damaged landscape evolved to become an accessible woodland park.

The Sculpture Park at Waitakaruru Arboretum is maintained by a charitable trust, owned by a stewardship foundation and supported by staff,

volunteers, artists, and visitors who share a commitment to guardianship of the land.

The arboretum is open year-round and invites the public to experience its evolving landscapes, sculpture, and living collections of trees.

Eric Appleton receives mayoral award



Eric Appleton, a mayoral awardee for his dedication to the plant industry in Wakefield and the rest of New Zealand. Photo: © Anne Hardie.
www.topsouthnow.co.nz/s/699cc8f2a811a1fe1815ff0a.

Eric Appleton, a 91-year-old icon of the New Zealand plant industry, was honoured with a surprise mayoral award at the Wakefield Town Hall in February 2026. Lured to the venue thinking he was attending a lecture on irises, he instead received a standing ovation from the hall packed with family, friends, and colleagues. Presented by Tasman Mayor Tim King – with Nelson Mayor Nick Smith and MP Maureen Pugh also in attendance – the award recognises Eric’s six decades of dedication to the nursery and forestry sectors.

His remarkable journey began in 1956 when Eric arrived in New Zealand after an adventurous 25,000 km motorbike journey. He eventually founded Appleton’s Tree Nursery, which has since grown into one of the country’s leading nurseries, producing more than 200 million trees. While heavily involved in standard forestry, he has been a strong advocate for ecological diversity, expanding the nursery’s catalogue to 350–600 species. Even during his impromptu acceptance speech, Eric

didn’t miss a beat, advising the modern forestry industry to diversify beyond *Pinus radiata* into exotic timbers like redwoods.

Beyond his business success, Eric Appleton is celebrated as an inspirational mentor who has helped former employees launch their own horticultural careers. His lifetime of achievements includes accolades from the International Plant Production Society, a Ron Flook award for arboriculture, and his 2022 appointment as patron of the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association. Eric continues to work in the industry, noting that his greatest pleasure remains driving through the countryside and spotting the vibrant autumn colours of trees he sold to his customers years ago.

Penny Zino receives CHS Outstanding Horticulturist Award



Penny Zino, 2026 CHS awardee.
Photo: © Juliet Nicholas.

Congratulations to Penny Zino for receiving the Canterbury Horticultural Society (CHS) Outstanding Horticulturist Award during their AGM in April 2026.

Penny is celebrated as the visionary creator of Flaxmere Garden near Hawarden in North



The house and grounds at Flaxmere. Photo: © Alan Jolliffe.

Canterbury. Since first putting a spade to the soil in 1966, Penny has transformed a rugged, stone-strewn sheep farm into an internationally acclaimed 3.2-hectare landscape garden – proving that with hard work, passion, and creative vision, even the harshest elements can be transformed. Under Penny’s lifelong stewardship, Flaxmere Garden has achieved the highest accolade in the country, rated as a 6-Star ‘Garden of International Significance’ by the New Zealand Gardens Trust.

To share the hard-won wisdom of her journey, Grant Mangin authored the book *Flaxmere Garden: 50 years of extremes* (2017). This work serves as both a memoir of Penny’s family’s relationship with the land and a guidebook detailing her design philosophies and planting combinations.

In 2020, Penny received a Fellowship from the RNZIH for her significant contributions to horticulture. Similarly, the CHS award is granted “To a person demonstrating an outstanding contribution in Horticulture.” Well done, Penny.

Hayden Foulds receives life membership of the New Zealand Rose Society

Congratulations to our esteemed Fellow, Hayden Foulds, who was awarded Life Membership of the New Zealand Rose Society (NZRS) at their AGM in Hamilton on 16th May 2026. This prestigious honour recognises Hayden’s decades of devotion, leadership, and expertise within the local and international rose community.

Hayden’s Life Membership adds to an already impressive list of well-deserved accolades celebrating his contributions across the horticultural sector:

- **WFRS World Rose Award (2025)** – Awarded by the World Federation of Rose Societies for his outstanding global service.
- **T.A. Stewart Memorial Award (2019)** – Recognising his premier contributions to rose culture across Australasia.
- **John Follett Award (2018)** – For his exemplary service to the International Plant Production Society (IPPS) New Zealand Region.

- **Fellow of the RNZIH (FRIH, 2018)** – Appointed in recognition of his significant impact on New Zealand horticulture.



Adrian Bullen (left), President of the NZRS, congratulating Hayden Foulds (right), NZRS Immediate Past President, Editor, and Webmaster for his Life Membership. Photo: www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=26691834490511398&set=a.726064274181775.

Hayden's tireless energy, depth of knowledge, and passion for sharing the joy of plants continue to inspire colleagues and home gardeners alike. Congratulations, Hayden, on another richly deserved milestone!

Two RNZIH Associate of Honours receive NZ Order of Merits

Congratulations to two of our Associates – **Dr Ron Beatson** (AHRH 2023) and **Russell Lowe** (AHRH 2021) – for receiving NZ Order of Merits during the Kings Birthday Honours on 1st June 2026. Their citations read:

Beatson, Dr Ronald Alan (Ron)

To be an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to horticulture. Dr Ron Beatson has advanced the research and development and breeding of hops in New Zealand.



Dr Ron Beatson, 2026 NZ Order of Merit.

“Dr Beatson has worked as a Plant and Food Research scientist for more than 50 years, producing more than 50 academic journal articles, books, and plant patents. He has led the breeding and genetics of hops in New Zealand for 38 years and is responsible for release of 17 specialty New Zealand hops cultivars, which are in high demand nationally and internationally. The majority of the commercial hop industry in New Zealand utilises hop varieties he developed, and the success of these hop varieties has driven significant expansion of the New Zealand hop industry. He has been involved in breeding and development of other key horticultural crops including kiwifruit, apricots, and berry fruits. He was part of the team awarded the Prime Minister's Science Prize for their response to the Psa kiwifruit vine canker. He has worked closely with brewers and growers to trial new hop varieties, contributing to their commercial success. In 1999 he was made a Knight of the Order of the Hop by the International Hop Growers Convention. In 2022 Dr Beatson became a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute for Agricultural and Horticultural Science, and is an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.”

Lowe, Mr Russell George

Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to horticulture and the kiwifruit industry.



Russell Lowe, 2026 NZ Order of Merit.

"Mr Russell Lowe spent more than 51 years working with the Department of Scientific Industrial Research and Crown Research Institutes, where he pioneered significant innovations in the kiwifruit industry. Mr Lowe was integral to the selection of the Hort16A vine and its polleniser cultivars, which would create the first Zespri Gold kiwifruit. Zespri Gold was launched in overseas markets in 2000 and saw more than \$3 billion in export earnings during its lifetime, establishing New Zealand as a world-leader in the kiwifruit industry. He led the creation of the Zesy002 cultivar, known as Zespri SunGold, after commercial crops of Hort16A were wiped out by a bacterial canker in 2010. He was involved in the selection of rootstocks Kaimai and Bounty 71, which have aided the success of SunGold by allowing it to grow in a wider range of places. Zespri SunGold now accounts for 60 percent of all kiwifruit orchards in New Zealand, with 127.6 million trays exported in 2025, earning \$2.2 billion annually. He led the development of Zes008, which was approved for commercial release in 2019 as the Zespri RubyRed. More than two out of every three kiwifruit exported in New Zealand come from Mr Lowe's cultivars, and he has received varied industry recognition from the Hayward Medal in 2012 to lifetime achievement and innovation awards."

NZ Gardens Trust



New and Outstanding Gardens Join The NZGT

The New Zealand Gardens Trust (NZGT) assessments at the end of 2025 were a standout, both in terms of the number of gardens receiving high ratings and their geographical spread. The newly rated gardens span the country from Northland to Otago and reflect a very high standard across a wide range of styles, scales and settings. Among them are **seven gardens awarded Five Stars**. These gardens are recognised as '**Gardens of National Significance**'.

New Five-Star Gardens

These Five-Star gardens each offer a distinct and memorable experience:

Silkwood Lodge Garden, Northland



A richly layered native and subtropical garden with Balinese influences, Silkwood Lodge combines mature palms, sculptural elements and mass planting with expansive vistas and intimate seating areas. A non-chemical swimming pool and regeneration pond support biodiversity and form a sculptural element within the landscape.

Pōhutukawa House, Auckland



A small but highly complex city garden designed alongside the house to create an integrated whole. An exceptional range of unusual plants is set within a disciplined structure, moving from semi-formal spaces viewed from the house to a lush subtropical jungle of ferns, bromeliads and orchids.

TreeChurch and Gardens, Waikato



Set within rolling farmland near Ōhaupō, this three-hectare garden is centred on a living chapel grown from trees. Surrounding garden rooms, water features and avenues of mature trees draw on English and European traditions to create a place widely regarded as one of contemplation and reflection.

Fernside, Wairarapa



A distinguished Arts and Crafts garden surrounding a 1924 Neo-Georgian homestead, Fernside is defined by formal vistas, romantic water features and shaded woodland glades. Historic elements and mature specimen trees contribute to a deeply atmospheric landscape of national significance.

Red Sheds, Wairarapa



A young but highly resolved garden where clarity of structure, proportion and restraint underpin the design. Hedging, topiary and architectural features create a landscape designed for longevity, ease of care and strong seasonal expression.

Barewood, Marlborough



Set around a century-old homestead, Barewood is a generously scaled garden now being thoughtfully re-interpreted by its current owners. The four-acre garden is organised into distinct rooms, with sweeping lawns, layered borders and a strong framework of shelter trees. Regenerative practices are being introduced, balancing classic structure with an evolving, ecologically focused approach.

Doctor's Point Garden, Otago



Located north of Dunedin, this remarkable plant collection garden contains more than 1,300 species and cultivars. Developed from challenging clay soils, it now encompasses arboretum plantings, woodland gardens and a wide range of alpine and subtropical species, demonstrating exceptional horticultural skill and long-term commitment.

According to Lead Assessor Paul Roper-Gee, the 2025 assessments revealed both maturity and confidence. *"We saw long-established gardens refined over decades alongside newer gardens with exceptional clarity of intent,"* he says. *"Across the country, it was fantastic to see both large and small gardens designed and cared for to a very high standard."*

The full list of the 14 new gardens for 2026 are:

Northland

- **Silkwood Lodge:** 5 Star

Auckland

- **Pōhutukawa House:** 5 Star
- **Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple NZ:** 4 Star

Waikato

- **TreeChurch and Gardens:** 5 Star

Hawke's Bay

- **Wallingford Homestead:** 4 Star

Wellington

- **Red Sheds:** 5 Star
- **Fernside Gardens and Historical Home:** 5 Star
- **Woodcote:** 4 Star
- **The Haven:** 4 Star

Marlborough

- **Barewood Garden:** 5 Star
- **Willows Green:** 4 Star

Canterbury

- **Ashburton Domain:** 4 Star
- **Willow Springs:** 3 Star

Otago

- **Doctor's Point:** 5 Star

NZGT Conference 2026: 'Honouring the Past, Gifting to the Future'

From 9–12th April, the NZ Gardens Trust brought its 2026 conference to South Canterbury and North Otago. Based in Timaru, the event took delegates on a four-day journey spanning high country and coastlines, public domains, and private estates. The conference highlighted the region's deep horticultural roots, contemporary land stewardship, and the extraordinary care of its gardeners.

Four Days of Exceptional Landscapes

Day 1: The Journey South – Setting out from Christchurch, attendees explored the well-known private gardens of **Frensham** and **Broadfield**. A welcome lunch at **Meadowbank Lodge** and an afternoon stop at the **Ashburton Domain** rounded out the trip down to Timaru.

Day 2: North Otago Treasures – Delegates travelled to Ōamaru, taking in the splendour of **Riverstone Kitchen**, the playful **Brookfield Park Garden**, and the historic **Ōamaru Public Gardens**. The afternoon featured the **Douglas Family Trust Arboretum** at Waianakarua and concluded with a visit to the tranquil and park-like **Willow Park** estate.

Day 3: High Country & Heritage – The heart of the conference featured a rare look at landscape history, regenerative farming, and Māori rock art at the historic **Craigmore Station**. After exploring the **Timaru Botanic Gardens** and the **Trevor Griffiths Rose Garden**, attendees gathered at **Sopheze on the Bay** for the **Botanica** luncheon, plant auction, afternoon conference sessions, and AGM.

Day 4: Community and Art – The final morning highlighted community-led riverside restoration projects in Geraldine before concluding at **Capricorns**, the extraordinary garden of **Ros and Philip Burdon**, where art and planting are closely integrated within a rural setting.

Inspiration, Ideas, and Innovation

The conference sessions offered thought-provoking perspectives on how we connect



Enjoying the sculptures at Brookfield Park.



A welcome to Craigmore Station and Moa Valley.



Ross Palmer delivering his keynote speech.



Capricorns.

with landscapes. Speakers **David Kennedy**, **Dylan Norfield**, and **Roselyn Fauth** shared insights on place, stories, and the future of our gardens, while local MP **James Meager** welcomed guests with warmth and humour at the gala dinner hosted at **The Landing Service**. Garden designer **Ross Palmer** delivered a deeply resonant keynote address, *'Walking Backward into the Future,'* perfectly capping off an extended weekend full of inspiration.

A big thank you to every garden owner, volunteer, guide, and speaker who opened their doors and shared their knowledge. We also extend our sincere thanks to our generous sponsors, **Botanica World Discoveries** and **Felco**, whose support made so much of the conference experience possible.

New chair and board members

The NZGT has appointed **Jen Nolan** as its new Chair, bringing corporate affairs, governance and a lifelong appreciation of gardens to the national organisation.



Jen Nolan, new Chair of the NZ Gardens Trust.

Nolan is the founder of Wellington-based corporate affairs agency At Large. She takes up the NZGT role following the leadership of outgoing Chair **Hamish Saxton**, whose tenure helped strengthen the profile of New Zealand as an international garden destination.

Nolan says New Zealand's gardening heritage is an outstanding example of the commitment shown by private garden owners and local authorities to create places that inspire, awe and revitalise.

"I'm delighted to continue the work led by Hamish Saxton, who has made an outstanding contribution to the Trust and to New Zealand's visitor sector. His work has helped more people understand the value of Kiwi gardens, both here and overseas."

"Now more than ever, gardens provide places to pause and reflect. A visit to a garden is, I believe, one of the best balms for troubled times," says Nolan.

The Trust also welcomes two new board members, **Luke Gardner** and **Hannah Myers**.

Luke Gardner is the owner of **Longbush Cottage** in the Wairarapa, a Four-Star rated NZGT garden.



Luke Gardner, new NZGT board member.

Since founding Longbush in 2011 he has built it into a recognised visitor destination, and is a familiar voice in garden media — featuring in *NZ Gardener*, *NZ House & Garden*, and on gardening podcasts in New Zealand and the UK.

Luke also serves as a Director of two technology companies, bringing governance experience alongside his deep understanding of the garden owner's world.



Hannah Myers, new NZGT board member.

Hannah Myers is a Chartered Accountant with nearly two decades of experience across corporate, not-for-profit, and community sectors, including 14 years with Fonterra in senior finance and governance roles.

She is a Member of the Institute of Directors and has chaired Dress for Success Hamilton, a charitable trust supporting women into paid work. She is currently Deputy Chair and Treasurer of the Cambridge Town Hall Trust. Hannah holds a First Class Honours degree in Accounting and Hotel Management from Lincoln University, and is studying towards a diploma in Landscape and Garden Design.

The board also acknowledges the reappointment of **Wolfgang Bopp** as Deputy Chair and congratulates him on being appointed a Fellow of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture for 2026. Bopp is Director of Christchurch Botanic Gardens and has a long record of leadership in public gardens and horticulture.

The Trust also thanked outgoing board members **Mel Haskell** of Casa Rosa Garden in Canterbury and **Sue Gifford** for their many years of service.

Victoria Read
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NEWS UPDATE

Introducing our 2026 finalists



Anna Kelland
Viticulture Technician
Marlborough
NZ Winegrowers



Dane Sales
Arborist
Auckland
NZArb



Phoebe Scherer
Technical Representative
Tauranga
Horticulture NZ



Clayton Hart
Propagation Manager
Auckland
NZ Plant Producers



Meg Spittal
Amenity Horticulturist
Auckland
Recreation Aotearoa

2026 Young Horticulturist of the Year finalists
Congratulations to the sector finalists **Anna Kelland** (Viticulture), **Dane Sales** (Arboriculture), **Phoebe Scherer** (Fruit & Vegetables), **Clayton Hart** (Plant Production), and **Meg Spittal** (Amenity Horticulture).

During Orientation Day (17th Aug 2026) at Cornwall Park, these finalists will come to Auckland to prepare for the grand final and meet the official partners, silver sponsors and the RNZIH Education Trust.

The Grand Final Competition days will be held 4–5th Nov, with the Awards Dinner on 5th Nov.

2026 Professional Development

The finalist experience extends well beyond competition day, with the 2025 finalists recently returning for two days of presentations, site visits and cross-sector networking.

The programme helped finalists connect, share ideas and build relationships across the horticulture sectors.

Thank you to Official Partners **T&G Fresh**, **Woolworths** and **Fruitfed Supplies** for hosting and supporting the two-day programme.



2026 Professional Development attendees. Pictured left to right: Nina Downer, River Foster, Jordan Sutherland, Jake Linklater, Grace Fulford and Jade Bedel.

Shona Willis
General Manager,
Young Horticulturist of the Year
shona@younghort.co.nz



tree of the year rākau o te tau NEW ZEALAND

The 5th annual Tree of the Year NZ has just concluded. The competition invites the public to vote for their favourite from a shortlist of 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.

The 2026 Winner is:

The Bucket Tree



Location: Tawa

Nominated by: Oliver Pease

Photo Credit: Andy Fenton [on Instagram @fentnz]

NZ Tree Register Number: WTR/499

For more than a century, this remarkable tree has been known locally as either the Earp Macrocarpa or the Bucket Tree. Planted in the 1850s on Boscobel Farm in Tawa, it dates back to the earliest years of European settlement in the area and is named after the property's original owner, William Earp.

What makes this macrocarpa (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*) truly unique is its distinctive shape. Since around 1879, it has been regularly trimmed into the form of an upturned bucket, creating a silhouette unlike any other tree in New Zealand. Generation after generation has maintained this unusual tradition, preserving not only the tree itself but also the story behind it.

Today, the Bucket Tree stands as a living landmark and a rare example of a tree shaped by people over nearly 150 years. While many historic trees are valued for their size or age, this one is celebrated for its character, its enduring connection to the Earp family and Boscobel Farm, and the extraordinary continuity of care that has maintained its iconic form for well over a century.

Part tree, part living sculpture, the Bucket Tree is a reminder that heritage can be found not only in the past, but also in the traditions that communities choose to carry forward.

2026 Finalists:

Ancient Pūriri



Location: New Plymouth

Nominated by: S. Wilson

Photo Credit: Matt Smillie

NZ Tree Register Number: TR/135

Nestled within Brooklands Park, this remarkable pūriri (*Vitex lucens*) has long been one of New Plymouth's most popular and recognisable trees. Known variously as the Giant Pūriri, Historic Pūriri, or Ancient Pūriri, it draws visitors from across the region who come to stand beneath its immense canopy and marvel at its sheer scale.

For generations, the tree has been a destination in its own right within the park. Its massive trunk, sprawling form, and obvious signs of great age inspire a sense of wonder and connection with the natural history of Taranaki. Children explore around its base, families pause beneath its branches, and countless photographs have been taken of one of Brooklands Park's most celebrated living landmarks.

The tree's reputation extends well beyond the park and, while its exact age remains unknown, visitors and commentators have long speculated about its antiquity, adding to the aura that surrounds this venerable giant.

Today, despite the natural hollows and decay that come with great age, the Ancient Pūriri remains one of New Zealand's most impressive native trees and a much-loved destination for those visiting Brooklands Park.

Kissing Tree



Location: Christchurch CBD

Nominated by: West Fynn

Photo Credit: Ra Hammer

NZ Tree Register Number: CR/2061

Planted in 1930 beside the Avon River near Christchurch's historic band rotunda and waka mooring, this beautiful Camperdown elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii') has quietly witnessed nearly a century of life unfolding beneath its sweeping canopy.

Among those stories is that of a young couple who shared their first kiss beneath its flowering branches. Looking up through the canopy, they found themselves surrounded by soft blossoms and filtered evening light, the tree seeming to close out the rest of the world and create a space that was quiet, intimate, and unforgettable.

What makes this tree so special is not only its elegance and striking form, but the experience of standing beneath it. Its cascading branches create a natural shelter, inviting visitors to pause, look upward, and connect with the landscape around them. Together, the river, rotunda, waka and elm create one of Christchurch's most romantic corners.

For almost a century, the tree has stood through concerts, celebrations, gatherings, quiet conversations and countless everyday moments along the riverbank. Like so many treasured trees, it is more than part of the scenery – it is a silent witness to the lives of the people around it, woven into the story of Christchurch itself.

The Sangro Survivor

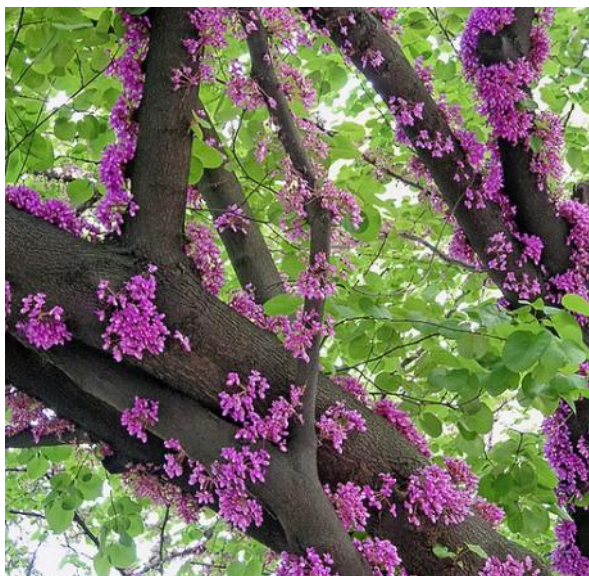
Location: Pukekohe, Auckland

Nominated by: Trish Jarvis

Photo Credit: Tidd.ly [on Tumblr]

NZ Tree Register Number: AR/1343

The Sangro Survivor carries a remarkable story of war, refuge, family, and remembrance. Grown from seed collected in Italy during World War II, this Judas tree stands today as a living link between the Sangro Valley and NZ.



Its story begins in the Sangro Valley, where New Zealand soldier Sam Allen was wounded in combat and took refuge beneath a Judas tree. During his recovery, he collected seed from the tree and later brought it home to New Zealand. The seed was given to his mother, who nurtured it in a container at the family home in Parnell.

In 1948, Sam's brother, Dr W.B. (Bill) Allen, and his wife Sheila planted the young sapling at their home in Wellington Street. When the family moved to Seddon Street in 1952, it was carefully transplanted to the front of their new home, where it continued to flourish. Years later, the property was sold and the land around the tree became a public park.

Today, this beautiful Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) stands not only as a striking specimen, but also as a living memorial – carrying within its branches a story of war, survival, family, and care across generations.

From a battlefield in Italy to a public park in New Zealand, few trees can tell such a remarkable story.

Mighty Old Mataī

Location: Macandrew Bay, Otago
Nominated by: Jacob McSweeney
Photo Credit: Glenda Bruce
NZ Tree Register Number: OR/1338



Tucked away within the upper canopy of Glenfalloch Woodland Garden on the Otago Peninsula stands a silent monument to time itself: this Mighty Old Mataī.

While its exact age is unknown, this impressive specimen is clearly of considerable age, having stood watch over the peninsula for many generations. To gaze up into its towering crown is to connect with a tree that was already mature long before the world around it took its present form.

Mataī (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*) are among New Zealand's most revered native forest giants, and this tree embodies the quiet strength and endurance for which the species is renowned. Rising above the surrounding woodland, it serves as a reminder of the ancient forests that once blanketed much of the peninsula.

Today, the Mighty Old Mataī remains one of Glenfalloch's most treasured inhabitants. Majestic, enduring and deeply rooted in place, it offers visitors a rare opportunity to stand in the presence of a living witness to centuries of Otago's natural history.

Old Goff

Location: Hobsonville, Auckland
Nominated by: Gavin Donaldson
Photo Credit: Brad Cadwallader
NZ Tree Register Number: AR/334



Known locally as Old Goff or The Orange Tree, this magnificent Sydney red gum (*Angophora costata*) is believed to have been planted by Governor Hobson, according to a plaque at its base. While its full history remains uncertain, its presence is impossible to ignore.

At around 146 years old, the tree is recognised as the largest known specimen of its species in the world. Its immense canopy is supported by huge, twisting limbs that seem to reach in every direction, creating a form that is both powerful and graceful.

The Sydney red gum is renowned for its distinctive smooth bark, which sheds naturally to reveal fresh patches of pink, orange-brown and cream before weathering to soft shades of grey. This ever-changing mosaic of colour makes the trunk and branches as captivating as the canopy itself.

For well over a century, this remarkable tree has stood watch over Hobsonville. Whether admired for its extraordinary size, its beautiful bark, or the mystery surrounding its origins, Old Goff is both a botanical treasure and a living link to Auckland's past.

As the largest known Sydney red gum in the world, Old Goff is truly one of a kind.

Thank you to everyone who voted, nominated, shared, and celebrated Aotearoa's extraordinary trees.

- **Tree of the Year:**
www.treeoftheyear.co.nz
- **New Zealand Tree Register (NZTR):**
www.treeregister.nz
- **NZ Notable Trees Trust:**
www.notabletrees.org.nz

Brad Cadwallader
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Another successful EPA submission

The RNZIH, in partnership with the Orchid Council of NZ (OCNZ), have been successful in another S26 Determination by the Environmental Protection Authority.

Following our application (APP204974) on 13th January 2026, 23 exotic orchid species have now been determined as 'not new' for the purposes of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. The decision committee acknowledged that the applicant presented "*meticulous and compelling evidence*" including a "*broad suite of corroborating information sources, including documentation of the species' natural habitats and known global and local distributions, historical records of identification within New Zealand, detailed sale catalogues from domestic suppliers, phytosanitary export documentation, and expert witness statements.*"

This means that the named orchid species can be traded in New Zealand without fear of prosecution and their import and export is facilitated (provided that phytosanitary requirements are met).

Special thanks to **Dr Marion Mackay** for all her hard work leading the application, **Murray Dawson** for proofreading and checking the botanical nomenclature, and **Glenys MacRae** (OCNZ) for assembling the extensive evidence base.

Photos from the IPPS-NZ 'Southern Challenge' conference

Day one: 30th April 2026



The IPPS-NZ conference kicked off with the introduction of the 2026 '7 Pack' – a fantastic group of emerging horticulturists. A big thank you to the **Horticulture Trust** for their continued support and sponsorship of this incredible opportunity.



We followed up with a delicious light dinner, before hearing from guest speaker **Allan Dippie**, all made possible thanks to **Intelligro**. A great start to the conference.

Day two: 1st May 2026



We started with a strong lineup of speakers, including **Mike Collins**, **Fiona Eadie**, **Dr Caroline Orchiston** (above) and **Jo Wakelin**, covering topics from business and heritage gardens through to earthquake risk and dryland gardening. After morning tea (thanks to **ICL**), we heard from **Murray Dawson** on engagement with MPI, and **Dennis Enright** on the use of biochar in container growing.



A sunny lunch at the Dunedin Botanic Garden (kindly sponsored by **PGG Fruitfed Supplies**) was followed by a tour through the propagation unit (left) and some of the collections in the upper gardens.

Day two: 1st May 2026 (continued)



In the afternoon, we visited **Blueskin Nurseries & Garden Centre**, where afternoon tea was sponsored by **Lifetech Laboratories**.



While there, we were treated to a propagation demonstration by the very knowledgeable **Lindsey** and **Terry Hatch**, before wandering over the road to the wholesale nursery.



The day wrapped up with dinner and the always-popular live auctions at the Distinction Dunedin Hotel, with dinner kindly sponsored by **Ellepot**.

Day three: 2nd May 2026

This day began with another strong lineup of speakers, including **Lindsey Hatch**, **Peter Espie**, **Kat Lord**, **Paul Fisher** and **Jim Faust**. Topics ranged from plant conservation and endangered native species through to soil microbiomes, AI in propagation, and stock plant management. Morning tea (and the close of the silent auction) was kindly sponsored by **Egmont Commercial**. Following the AGM we had lunch at the Distinction Dunedin Hotel, sponsored by **Canterbury Landscape Supplies** before we headed out for the afternoon visits.



The group split between visits to **Janefield Hydroponics** (above, left) and **Ribbonwood Nurseries** (above, right) before coming together again for afternoon tea at **Wals Plant Land**, kindly sponsored by **TNZ**. While there, we had plenty of fun riding the 1.6 km track on miniature trains through the amazing gardens (below).



The evening programme took us to **Tūhura Otago Museum** for happy hour (thanks to **Rainbow Park**), followed by a talk from the museum's tropical forest gardener and a butterfly release (left).

We wrapped up the day with dinner and the conference awards, with dinner kindly sponsored by **Daltons**.

Day four: 3rd May 2026



Jed Tweedie followed with insights into the 'Vern Paddock Project' ahead of morning tea (thanks to **Commercial Horticulture** magazine).

We also heard from exchange participants **Wendy Hall**, **Jake Linklater** (right) and **Shelby Klassen**, highlighting what an incredible opportunity the IPPS exchanges are.

A light lunch (sponsored by **Orion Labelling Solutions**) wrapped up the IPPS programme.



The IPPS Dunedin conference wrapped up with an engaging final morning of presentations.

We heard from **Daphne Lee** (left) on the incredible fossil plant treasures of Foulden Maar – a real highlight, with the chance to get hands-on with 23-million-year-old fossils and gain a unique window into Aotearoa's ancient flora.



Following the conference, the RNZIH hosted their awards and lecture. Although several of the IPPS-NZ delegates had to leave that morning, thankfully a good-sized crowd remained. Seven of the nine awardees were present: **Fran Rawling**, **Gordon Bailey** and **Penny Cliffin** (RNZIH Associates of Honour), **Dylan Norfield** and **Jill Reader** (Fellowships), **Elsie Hall** (Garden History awardee) and **Gillian Vine** (Horticultural Communicator).



The day concluded with the Banks Memorial Lecture from **Janice Lord** (right), exploring what we know (and don't) about pollination biology and breeding systems of New Zealand plants.

A fantastic few days all round, with plenty of ideas, inspiration, and connections to take away.



Photos and words: Vanessa Healey, www.facebook.com/ippsnz

New members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Regular members:

Brigid McPherson	Tauranga
Chris Haldane	Hawke's Bay
Elsie Hall	Marlborough

NZ Gardens Trust members:

Michael & Jenneke Dodds: Silkwood Lodge,
Northland
Geoffrey Marshall & John Hayward:
Pōhutukawa House, Auckland
Nick Yoong (main contact): Fo Guang Shan
Buddhist Temple NZ, Auckland
Chris & Bev Gatenby: TreeChurch and Gardens,
Waikato

Gareth Dunkerley: Wallingford Homestead,
Hawke's Bay
Lyn & Hop Eglington: Red Sheds, Wellington
Murray Rose & Nicola Guinness: Fernside
Gardens, Wellington
Catlin Powers: Woodcote, Wellington
Lianne Cox & Graeme Rule: The Haven,
Wellington
Rosie Broad & Pete Greenhalgh: Barewood
Garden, Marlborough (new owners)
Dave & Kirsty Wraight: Willows Green,
Marlborough
Ian Soper (main contact): Ashburton Domain,
Canterbury
Chris Boon & Andrea Phillips: Willow Springs,
Canterbury
Dylan Norfield: Doctor's Point, Otago



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