

2022 Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Awards

Horticultural Communicator Award

John ('Jack') Gordon Hobbs



Jack Hobbs, RNZIH Horticultural Communicator for 2022.

The Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture (RNZIH) Horticultural Communicator Award is a new award for 2022, to recognise individuals who are outstanding horticultural communicators. We are delighted to congratulate Jack Hobbs for being the first recipient.

Jack is widely known to the horticultural community and the gardening public. He is Manager of the Auckland Botanic Gardens, having worked there since 1988.

Jack hosted a weekly radio gardening programme on Newstalk ZB from February 1992 until 2001. He was a presenter of television gardening programmes from 1991 until 2003, first on Living Earth on TV3 from 1992 to 1994, followed by eight years from 1995 until 2003 as a presenter on the beloved Maggie's Garden Show alongside Maggie Barry, Ruud Kleinpaste, Bill Ward, and Professor John Walker. Jack Hobbs became a

household name.

He has been involved as writer and/or photographer for numerous magazines and gardening books. Since 1989 Jack has been a regular contributor of articles and photography to the *NZ Gardener*. He has contributed hundreds of articles and has an image collection of many thousands of plants and gardens.

With Terry Hatch he co-authored *Bulbs for New Zealand Gardeners and Collectors* (1994) and wrote the text for *Seasons, A Journey Through the New Zealand Garden* (Sally Tagg and Jack Hobbs, 2011). He provided the photography for *Ferns for New Zealand Gardens* (Sandra Van der Mast and Jack Hobbs, 1998). He also completed the manuscript for *A New Zealand Handbook of Bulbs and Perennials* when Hugh Redgrove passed away (H. Redgrove, Godwit Publishing, 1991). Jack has contributed to many

other horticultural books including *Cultivation of New Zealand Plants* (L. Metcalf, Godwit Publishing, 1993) and *Climbing Plants* (Nicholls, Godwit Publishing, 1995).

Jack has delivered many public lectures with ease and authority, and showcases his outstanding photography; truly a consummate communicator. He has presented at many conferences including Botanic Gardens Australia New Zealand (BGANZ), International Plant Propagators' Society (IPPS), NZ Gardens Trust (NZGT), and NZ Plant Producers Incorporated (NZPPI). He has spoken to many specialist societies and gardening groups. In 2000 he presented the RNZIH Banks Memorial Lecture on 'Special characteristics of Auckland gardens', and is scheduled to deliver this prestigious lecture again at the NZ Gardens Trust conference in 2023.

He is a long-standing member of the RNZIH, joining as a student in 1977. In 1990 Jack was awarded the Plant Raisers' Award (for his breeding work on the popular 'Wiri' series of *Hebe* and *Leptospermum* cultivars), in 1991 became a Fellow of the RNZIH, in 1996 became an Associate of Honour, and from 2003 to 2011 served as President of the RNZIH.

**Citation prepared by
Murray Dawson**