

2017 Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Awards

Plant Raisers' Award

Robin ('Rob') Bruce Somerfield



Rob Somerfield (RHS) being presented the 2017 Plant Raisers' Award by RNZIH President Dr Keith Hammett (LHS). Photo: Murray Dawson.

Robin (Rob) Somerfield comes from a family of horticulturists. His father and siblings are all involved with different facets of the industry. Rob began breeding roses in 1983. The first of his raisings to be disseminated commercially was *Rosa* 'Blackberry Nip' in 1998, the same year that Rob and his wife Linda established Glenavon Roses in Tauranga.

Rob's primary objective has always been plant health, rather than just visual novelty. This requires a long period of testing selections before any are named and disseminated. Other important breeding objectives are floriferousness, repeat flowering and compact plant habit. The latter two objectives are important because New Zealand is a windy country and for eye appeal at retail outlets.

To date Rob has released 33 rose cultivars in New Zealand with some having reached Australia and Europe. Rob has had considerable success at the International Rose trials held in New Zealand as well as in trials in Australia and the Netherlands. These are detailed below.



Rosa 'Christchurch Remembers' (Somcrimart) 2016. A floribunda *R.* 'Heartache' × *R.* 'Crimson Bouquet' hybrid. Dedicated to the 185 people who lost their lives in the February 2011 Canterbury earthquake. The large blooms are crimson red in colour and darken around the edges as they age. A medium growing variety with very good health. Photo: Hayden Foulds.

Several of Rob's roses have been named for special causes. These include: *Rosa* 'Christchurch Remembers', to commemorate those who lost their lives in the 2011 Christchurch earthquake; *R.* 'Looking Good', for a cancer charity; *R.* 'Pacific Glory', which Rob donated as the official convention rose for the 2013 World Federation of Rose Societies in Palmerston North; and *R.* 'Scent to Remember', named as a fundraiser for a local hospice close to Rob's nursery.

Because of their significance and their outstanding qualities, these are the four cultivars for which Rob has been awarded the 2017 Plant Raisers' Award.

New Zealand was lucky that the legendary Sam McGredy moved his rose breeding operation from Northern Ireland to New Zealand in 1972, thereafter giving this country a reputation for the breeding of high quality roses. Rob credits Sam with being an inspiration for him as well as providing advice and encouragement.

This award acknowledges that the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture has faith that Rob will continue to further enhance the reputation established by Sam long into the future.

Citation prepared by Keith Hammett and Hayden Foulds



Rosa 'Looking Good' (Somannmac) 2015. A floribunda *R.* 'Anniversary' × *R.* 'Sky Tower' hybrid. Named for the Look Good Feel Better NZ cancer charity as a fundraiser and to promote the work that they do. Clusters of two toned pink blooms are produced in large clusters. Tall growing plant with very dark green glossy foliage. Photo: Hayden Foulds.



Rosa 'Pacific Glory' (Somlinone) 2013. A floribunda *R.* 'Anniversary' × *R.* 'Sky Tower' hybrid. Selected as the official convention rose for the 2013 World Federation of Rose Societies Regional Convention in Palmerston North. The lavender pink blooms have a hint of tan and make a great display in full bloom. A very healthy rose. Photo: Hayden Foulds.



Rosa 'Scent to Remember' (Somspice) 2006. A floribunda *R.* 'Enchantment' × *R.* 'Warm Wishes' hybrid. Named for the Waipuna Hospice at Te Puna close to Rob's nursery this rose has raised thousands of dollars so far. The peach and apricot blend of coloured blooms have a strong sweet fruity fragrance set against deep green shiny foliage. Photo: Glenavon Roses.

Awards won by Rob Somerfield

New Zealand International Rose Trials, Palmerston North

Gold Star of the South Pacific – presented to the overall winner of the trials:

- 2016 *R.* 'Quintessential'
- 2015 *R.* 'Fireball'
- 2014 *R.* 'Christchurch Remembers'
- 2009 *R.* 'Love Heart'
- 2007 *R.* 'Sunline'
- 2006 *R.* 'Pacific Glory'
- 2004 *R.* 'Star Quality'

Rob is second only to Sam McGredy on the all-time winners list of the New Zealand International Rose Trials.

Silver Star of the City of Palmerston North – best New Zealand amateur bred rose:

- 1998 *R.* 'Blackberry Nip'

June Hocking Fragrance Award – most fragrant rose on trial:

- 2009 *R.* 'Creme de la Creme'

World Federation of Rose Societies People's Choice Award:

- 2016 *R.* 'Quintessential'
- 2013 *R.* Sompounamu (breeder reference, not yet named)

Certificate of Merit:

- 2016 *R.* 'Purple Pizzazz'
- 2015 *R.* 'Jack Frost'
- 2015 *R.* 'Shangri-La'
- 2014 *R.* 'Eye Candy'
- 2014 *R.* 'Hot Topic'

- 2013 *R.* 'Scott Base'
- 2013 *R.* Somtopteen (breeder reference, not yet named)
- 2012 *R.* 'Looking Good'
- 2011 *R.* 'St Mary's Rose'
- 2011 *R.* 'Wild Cherry'
- 2010 *R.* 'Diamond Design'
- 2010 *R.* 'Lemon N Lime'
- 2009 *R.* 'Picotee'
- 2007 *R.* 'Golden Gift'
- 2005 *R.* 'White Romance'
- 1998 *R.* 'Blackberry Nip'

New Zealand Rose of the Year Trials, Hamilton

New Zealand Rose of the Year – overall winner:

- 2016 *R.* 'Christchurch Remembers'
- 2015 *R.* 'Looking Good'
- 2014 *R.* 'Love Heart'
- 2013 *R.* 'Wild Cherry'
- 2011 *R.* 'Lemon N Lime'

Best Hybrid Tea:

- 2016 *R.* 'Sunline'
- 2014 *R.* 'Love Heart'

Best Floribunda:

- 2016 *R.* 'Christchurch Remembers'
- 2015 *R.* 'Looking Good'
- 2014 *R.* 'Little Miss Perfect'
- 2013 *R.* 'Wild Cherry'
- 2011 *R.* 'Lemon N Lime'

Best Climber:

- 2015 *R.* 'Double Fragrance'
- 2012 *R.* 'Climbing'

Blackberry Nip'

- 2006 *R.* 'Sky Tower'
- 2002 *R.* 'Kaimai Sunset'

Most Fragrant:

- 2015 *R.* 'Double Fragrance'
- 2012 *R.* 'Climbing Blackberry Nip'

Best New Zealand Raised Rose:

- 2016 *R.* 'Christchurch Remembers'
- 2015 *R.* 'Looking Good'
- 2014 *R.* 'Love Heart'
- 2013 *R.* 'Wild Cherry'
- 2011 *R.* 'Lemon N Lime'

Children's Choice Award:

- 2016 *R.* 'Christchurch Remembers'
- 2015 *R.* 'Looking Good'
- 2014 *R.* 'Picotee'
- 2013 *R.* 'Wild Cherry'
- 2012 *R.* 'Star Quality'
- 2010 *R.* 'Love Heart'

National Rose Trial Garden of Australia (Adelaide)

Bronze Medal:

- 2009 *R.* 'Pacific Glory' (sold in Australia as *R.* 'So in Love')

The Hague Trials, Netherlands

1st Class Certificate:

- 2005 *R.* 'Cupid'

Gold Certificate:

- 2007 *R.* 'Cupid'