

## Fellow of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (FRIH)

### Malcolm Peter Woolmore



Like many notable plants people, Malcolm Woolmore began his horticultural life at an early age. When he was nine, Malcolm entered a Titirangi Primary School competition for the Atkinson Memorial Cup by growing native plants from seed. Although he didn't win, his interest in growing plants was captured.

As a teenager attending Auckland Grammar School, Malcolm needed a new sail for his yacht which he raced through the French Bay Yacht Club. His parents strongly suggested he should find an after school and holiday job to fund his sailing activities. His schoolboy job at Lyndale Nurseries Ltd, then based at 63 Parker Ave, New Lynn, thus started what was to be a lifetime involvement with and eventual ownership of that plant nursery.

Lyndale was founded by Noelyn Parr in 1960 after completing her apprenticeship with nurseryman and plant breeder Jack Clark. The nursery was a dynamic wholesale supplier to predominantly North Island retail outlets. Noelyn was a formidable and accomplished business operator in the very male-dominated world of nurserymen.

Although fascinated by the concept of growing plants that people willingly exchanged money for, Malcolm had always wanted to be a lawyer. However, this changed at age 16 when he met one.

Malcolm continued working at Lyndale during his school and then university holidays.

He completed a BSc at Canterbury University (Botany and Physical Geography) in 1978. Following graduation, he then embarked on a three-month project at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Herbarium under the curatorship of Alan Jolliffe.

In 1979 Malcolm travelled to Australia for a horticultural position in the town planning team of the City of Sydney Council. This position confirmed he did not want to spend his career confined to an 'Ivory Tower'.

A golden opportunity came to Malcolm in 1980 when Noelyn Parr offered a third shareholding in Lyndale Nurseries Auckland Ltd. This new company was established as a propagation and young plant specialist nursery at the new site of 82 Trig Road, Whenuapai, where it remains today. In 2001, some 20 years later, Malcolm acquired a total share issue of Lyndale Nurseries Auckland Ltd.

Malcolm's business interests have diversified. In 2003 he established Lyndale Custom Mix Ltd, a specialist supplier of innovative wholesale bulk potting mixes to the nursery industry. In the same year he established Lyndale Intellectual Property Ltd, a specialist company representing plant breeders' and dealing in Plant Variety Rights (PVR), Plant Breeders Rights (PBR), and plant patents. Then in 2009 Malcolm established KiwiFlora Ltd, an amalgamation of assets represented by Lyndale Intellectual Property and Damsted Flowers. In 2018 he acquired total share issue of KiwiFlora Ltd.

Through these businesses, Malcolm is justifiably proud of being responsible for the production and distribution of 100,000,000 young plants in New Zealand, produced predominantly through cuttings and tissue culture. He also takes pleasure in creating a financial return to plant breeders in New Zealand by introducing their creations to local and overseas markets.

Not only has Malcolm developed some of the most successful plant related businesses in New Zealand, but it is a testament to his character that he has always given back and provided support and encouragement to the wider industry. He is very generous with his time and making his nursery available to visits for both local and international groups.

Malcolm joined the International Plant Propagators' Society New Zealand Region (IPPS-NZ) in 1981 and has served on the committee as Editor (1981–1983), Vice President (1984–1985), President (1986), International Director (1986–1988), and IPPS International Director (2001). He continues to be heavily involved, supporting local IPPS-NZ activities and committing much time and effort to ensure the ongoing success of the organisation. In 2006 Malcolm received the IPPS-NZ Award of Merit, the highest award for all-round meritorious service to IPPS New Zealand and to New Zealand horticulture.

From 2002 to 2017, Malcolm has held prominent advisory roles in the former New Zealand Nurseryman's Association (NZNA) and Nursery and Garden Industry Association (NGIA), now named New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated (NZPPI). He was an early supporter of the NZNA Stars of Spring programme, which in the 2000's annually named a range of selections that were considered exceptional.

Since 2002, Malcolm has been a member of the New Zealand National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) Technical Advisory Group. Because of their invasive attributes, the NPPA is a cooperative agreement of plants banned from propagation, sale, and distribution. This agreement is between MPI, unitary and regional councils, the Department of Conservation and the NZPPI. More recently, in 2018, NZPPI nominated Malcolm to represent the horticulture industry in an MPI 'First Principles Working Group'.

This working group will investigate New Zealand's plant imports system for setting import requirements for plants and seeds across the horticulture and the primary production sector. Malcolm's roles in representing the nursery industry, and the practical experience he brings to the table, are invaluable.

Since the inception of the Agapanthus Working Group in 2012, Malcolm has been heavily involved in low fertility *Agapanthus* programmes. He is also

a strong supporter of the Auckland Botanic Gardens and generously provides them with plant material.

Malcolm joined the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (RNZIH) in June 2013. He is a long-term supporter of the RNZIH Education Trust Young Horticulturist Competition which began in 2005.

As evidenced here, Malcolm is one of the most notable introducers and distributors of new plants both in

New Zealand and around the world. He contributes to many horticultural initiatives and organisations. An RNZIH fellowship is awarded to "Members who have made a significant contribution to horticulture by their activities or interest in or service to horticulture", and Malcolm Peter Woolmore is a most worthy recipient.

**Citation prepared by  
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### Nicola Louise Rochester



Nicola Rochester is Regional Sales Manager for ICL in New Zealand and is also actively involved in the RNZIH Education Trust and Young Horticulturist Competition.

#### The formative years

Nicola has always been connected to plants and the soil. "My mum tells me that as a toddler my curious fingers loved poking around in the soil, followed shortly thereafter by a 'wild foods festival' tasting in my mouth", says Nicola.

Appreciating the relationship of soil to senses makes her feel good about life and living, so it makes perfect sense that horticulture eventually became her career. That revelation became clear after meeting the career counsellor during her 7th form year at Hagley High School, Christchurch, in 1979. Nicola recalls being asked "What do you enjoy?" And what she enjoys today is not much different from then: plants and science, with a health bent.

Growing up in Hornby, Christchurch, Nicola's aircraft engineer father and her mother managed their home and four children, three of whom were under the age of five in those early years. On their ¾ acre section the family created additional income through producing and selling tomatoes, seasonal vegetables and eggs from 300 hens. Nicola remembers de-lateralling tomato plants: "If I did half the glasshouse, 500 plants, I got 50 cents and I couldn't wait for the laterals to grow."

From the age of twelve Nicola worked at Oderings Nursery after school and during holidays, and it wasn't long before the garden shed at home was lined with plastic and her newly gained knowledge put into practice growing plants, with herbs being a favourite. At fourteen her father decided to upgrade the garden shed and build her a glasshouse. Nicola employed two young girls from across the road to keep up with demand from the local outlets she supplied. "It was exciting to grow and sell my own produce at a young age and develop individual placards about medicinal properties for each of the plants. They also stood out as they were in green and white candy-striped PB3/4's, generously donated by Oderings," she says.

Operations became more sophisticated. She used her father's old kerosene heater at night to take the edge off the cold and for a bit of CO<sub>2</sub> enrichment. Rex Mundy

in Horotane Valley allowed her some heated greenhouse space to germinate basil plants.

Nicola was fascinated with making her own herbal concoctions and remedies. "I used to dry and grind up parsley and horseradish roots and research what properties were in the herbs to treat ailments, and I experimented on friends and family. I still use the heavy ceramic mortar and pestle I bought from Kempthorne & Prosser in Christchurch and I still experiment on family," she says.

Nicola considered becoming a qualified herbalist but decided the required correspondence to and from England was impractical for her.

Productivity out of that modest glasshouse ended up fully funding Nicola's university studies and various sporting interests.

Physical challenges have always been important to Nicola. At 23 she was the youngest female in the country to earn a second degree Black Belt in Seido Karate, and for four years she cycled the 40 kilometre round trip to Lincoln College (now Lincoln University). She also completed a Coast-to-Coast event. Later, in the USA, she ran a marathon just for the challenge. Nicola still exercises regularly, usually with foot-on-spade or hand-on-trowel, on the four hectare property in Whitford she shares with her partner of twenty years, Mike Cato.