

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
Alan Jolliffe and Murray Dawson**

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

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 CO₂ 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.

Career in horticulture

Nicola attended Lincoln College from 1980 to 1984 gaining a Bachelor of Horticultural Science (First Class Honours). Her thesis was on *The effect of irrigation and fertiliser application on the chemical composition of some New Zealand potato cultivars* which provided a good segue to her later career.

Nicola sums up her career choices as: "There is so much diversity in horticulture, whether you love science, genetics, or growing plants for pleasure, for food or posterity. Walking amongst trees, admiring beautiful flowers, rolling down a grassy slope or harvesting from your own veggie garden and sharing your bounty with friends and neighbours, these things are why I love horticulture. When you think about solutions being sought for many of the ills on our planet: cleaning up nutrient-rich water, growing plant-based proteins to replace four legged ones, hemp that can clothe and feed us, medicinal cannabis for our pains, carbon-sinking algae, and trees and forests to mitigate our emissions, not to mention all the questions still unanswered in the microbiology of our soil. What other career choice is there?"

After graduating from Lincoln, Nicola found work outside horticulture for a few years, as a pharmaceutical sales representative in Christchurch and later as a product manager in Auckland. Back then she could not see any good career opportunities in horticulture so followed her other interest which is health. Fortuitously, it was the range of subjects she studied in her horticultural degree, including nutritional biochemistry, that enabled her entry into the pharmaceutical industry which, Nicola says, turned out to be a great training ground in professionalism and sales.

Returning to her roots in 1988, Nicola worked as branch manager for Botannix Garden Centre in Manurewa, Auckland, then from 1990 to 1995 took on the role of product manager for Ecogen Inc., a biological pesticide company specialising in Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) products which involved two years working in New Jersey, USA.

Since then, over the last 24 years Nicola has become well known as the New Zealand face of Osmocote® and has seen several company name changes, from Scotts to Everris and now ICL. In the early years at Scotts, Nicola says she was privileged to befriend the late Murray Richards (then an Associate Professor at Massey University), a founding influencer in the nursery industry, who 'took her under his wing'.

Nicola uses her penchant for trials and analyses to provide technical support to hundreds of growers across all plant producing sectors. She is adept at problem solving, asking many questions, listening to responses and matching solutions with growers' objectives.

The RNZIH Education Trust

Nicola first became involved with the RNZIH Education Trust in 2005 when the then event manager, Elenka Nikoloff, invited her to a Young Horticulturist Competition finalists' dinner. Andrew Tayler of Rainbow Park Nursery was secretary of the trust and encouraged Nicola to join the trust board. Over the next few years she took an active role, eventually becoming chairperson in 2011, a responsibility greatly helped, she says, by having a capable team around her. RNZIH Education Trust Board members are volunteers, and associated with various sectors in horticulture, all sharing the common goal of ensuring the Young Horticulturist Competition continues to go from strength-to-strength. Nicola handed over the chairperson's role in 2015, remaining on the board as a trustee.

Nicola has a reputation for arriving at RNZIH Education Trust meetings well prepared and managing issues that arise in a balanced, matter-of-fact way so the outcomes are always positive. Her commitment to the trust is valued and highly respected by others on the board. The RNZIH Education Trust has managed the Young Horticulturist Competition since its inception in 2003.

Nicola is an enthusiastic supporter and advocate for the Young Horticulturist Competition, saying "I want to encourage as many young people as possible to take part in the Young Horticulturist Competition.

Competitions are important for healthy industries. They not only help identify emerging talent but they're catalysts to encourage young people to grow and develop, to the benefit of themselves, their employers and the industry."

Nicola is pleased to see that every year the competition continues to grow and get better. Each year competitors come from a wide range of horticultural sectors: fruit, vegetable, viticulture, landscaping, nursery, parks and recreation and floriculture. Nicola says it is this diversity of sectors that make the competition both unique and important. Unique – because there is nothing else like it in New Zealand. Important – because at the grand final dinner there are more than 250 people present, representing a wide range of horticultural sectors.

Nicola takes great pleasure in hearing the stories of the finalists; where they come from, what they are doing, where they are going. She says "you gain a new appreciation for the work and the diversity involved in the industry. You appreciate how many opportunities there are for growth and that career paths abound. You leave the grand final evening feeling really good about yourself and the important industry you are involved in".

Nicola acknowledges the support of her employer ICL. She says involvement with the RNZIH Education Trust has contributed to her personal and professional development and believes that her employer recognises that this benefits the company too. It is a win-win for both parties. Industry organisations like the RNZIH Education Trust and the groups who run sector competitions leading to the Young Horticulturist Competition rely hugely on voluntary input and this is only possible with the support of like-minded employers.

Other contributions

Nicola is a forward thinker with a passion for the industry that goes beyond her day to day job at ICL. She offers her time willingly for projects within the nursery industry as well as for the Young Horticulturist event. She is a great people person, taking time to listen and acknowledge others and their points of view.

She has a big heart which shows through her interactions with people and the projects she commits to within the horticultural industry.

Nicola has contributed to the NZ Nursery and Garden Industry Association (now NZ Plant Producers Inc.) as their representative on the board of the then NZ Horticultural Industry Training Organisation, from 2009 to 2012.

She has served as vice-president for the International Plant Propagators' Society New Zealand Region in 2012, and as committee member from 2013 to 2014.

Following her involvement in the RNZIH Education Trust from 2005, Nicola formally joined the parent RNZIH in July 2011.

2019 FRIH award

These contributions, and especially her work with the Young Horticulturist Competition, make Nicola Louise Rochester a most worthy new Fellow of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.

Citation prepared by Andrew Maloy and Elenka Nikoloff

Award of Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (AHRIH)

Dr Marion Brenda MacKay



Marion MacKay is a Senior Lecturer in Environmental Management at Massey University, specialising in plant biodiversity and conservation, particularly *ex situ* conservation.

Marion teaches and coordinates a wide range of subjects, including Environmental Science Field Work I and II, Environmental Science I, Integrative Studies, Landscape Revegetation, Managing the Landscape, National Expedition: Agriculture and Environment, New Zealand Environments, and Urban and Farm Forestry.

She has also supervised the research of many Master's and Doctoral students at Massey, who have studied diverse topics including urban trees, naturalised plants, rhododendrons, and seed banking of New Zealand natives.

Marion's own research interests focus on the range and diversity of exotic woody plants held in botanic gardens and plant collections throughout

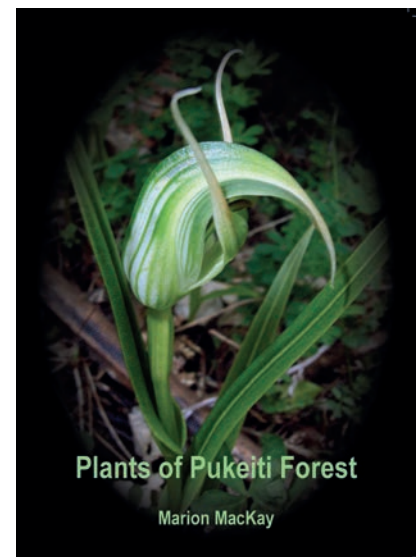
New Zealand, and the management and utility of that plant diversity, specifically:

- development of international conservation programmes for plant biodiversity in botanic gardens and plant collections, with current projects on the genus *Rhododendron*
- utility and management of exotic flora in New Zealand, with current projects on *Rhododendron* and *Juniperus*
- conservation and seed-banking of New Zealand native flora
- management of the environment, with a focus on plant biodiversity.

Marion's research career began while studying for a BHortSc (gaining 1st Class Hons in 1981). In 1979 one of her lecturers offered the chance to visit Eastwoodhill and Marion was immediately hooked by the arboretum. This cemented her interest in exotic flora and led to her PhD studies, during 1989 to 1996, examining the collection and management of exotic woody plants held at Eastwoodhill Arboretum.

Marion became deeply involved with the living collections at Pukeiti and was elected to the Board of the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust in 2004. In addition to the exotic plantings at Pukeiti Arboretum, she became interested in botanising the native flora of the surrounding 350 ha forest.

This led to her involvement in native restoration of the forest and the 2011 publication of her book *Plants of Pukeiti Forest* (585 pp.)¹.



Other native flora projects followed, including ongoing work on the regeneration of kauri forest at Limestone Downs, a 300 ha site south of Port Waikato.

Marion has delivered many conference presentations. One highlight was in 2005 when she gave a presentation on New Zealand woody plant collections at an International Dendrology Society seminar on *ex situ* conservation at Cambridge University, England. While there, Marion met Sara Oldfield, then Secretary General of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI). Sara invited Marion to the

¹ Reviewed in *The New Zealand Garden Journal*, 2011, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 24.