

News from the RNZIH Education Trust

2014 Young Horticulturist of the Year

'Young Grower' wins 10th annual 'Young Horticulturist of the Year' title

This year's Young Horticulturist of the Year is Patrick Malley from Northland (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Patrick Malley, 2014 Young Horticulturist of the Year winner, with partnering sponsors. Left to right: Malcolm Nitschke, General Manager for AGMARDT, Andrew Keaney, Executive General Manager NZ for T&G, Patrick Malley holding his award aloft, and Max Spence, National Manager Fruited Supplies.

Representing Horticulture NZ, Patrick competed with five other finalists (Fig. 2), all under the age of 30, in the grand final competition. The winners were announced on the evening of Thursday 13 November in Auckland.



Fig. 2 Group photo of the 2014 YHOTY finalists. Left to right: Jacqui Jones, Sarah Fenwick, Caitlin Thorburn, Nicolas Muir, Patrick Malley, Paul Robinson.

The evening awards dinner concluded two days of competitions including practical activities, computer management skills, presentation skills and an interview by a panel of judges. Leading up to the competition, contestants had also completed a written business project in their own time.

Their final challenge was a three-minute speech outlining their vision to attract 15,000 extra people to horticulture to meet the government's goal of increasing qualified staff in the industry by 2025.

Patrick took home the Young Horticulturist of the Year prize including \$7,500 of travel and accommodation.

T&G Executive General Manager NZ, Andrew Keaney said competitions like this are a great way to nurture the interest and passion of the younger generations as well as showcase the industry. "We want to encourage that passion from primary school all the way through to university and beyond, as it's an incredibly rewarding industry to be part of."

RNZIH Education Trust Chairperson Nicola Rochester said the past decade of Young Horticulturist of the Year competitions has positively influenced horticulture at all levels.

"It supports young people, promotes careers in horticulture and grows the capability of young people across all industry sectors. More than 60 talented young people have been identified and supported, all with a high probability of going on to leadership roles in the industry. This coincides with the government's objective of increasing skilled and qualified workers in the horticulture industry," she explained.

Winner steps up again. And again.

This is the first time most finalists have had to manage a project from beginning to end, requiring motivation and discipline along the way. Presenting their AGMARDT Market Innovation Project to a panel of judges was also new for them.

Patrick Malley also won the Primary ITO Career Development Award, as well as the Fruited Supplies Leadership Award. His traceability technology for kiwifruit won the AGMARDT Market Innovation Project. Through his project a consumer anywhere in the world would be able to scan kiwifruit packing cases to identify the orchard where the fruit grew.

Second prize in the AGMARDT Market Innovation went to Southland's

(Amenity Horticulture) Sarah Fenwick's lightweight glove design. The durable, cost effective glove inner is made of titanium lined limestone neoprene to keep gardeners' fingers warm and nimble.

Paul Robinson's 'Nip it in the Bud Virus Indicators' took third place in the AGMARDT Market Innovation Project.

Judges looked for individuals who could make a difference in their sectors and the industry, going beyond great skills to include leadership, attitude and personality.

Full Results for 2014 Young Horticulturist of the Year competition

Young Horticulturist of the Year winner Patrick Malley received:

- \$7,500 travel and accommodation package
- \$1,000 Everris specialty products
- \$100 horticultural magazine subscription for one year.

Second place was awarded to viticulturist Paul Robinson of Hawke's Bay who received:

- \$5,500 Massey University study scholarship
- \$750 Everris specialty products
- \$100 NZ horticultural magazine subscription for one year.

Third place was awarded to Landscaping NZ's Nic Muir from Christchurch who received:

- \$1,000 cash
- \$500 Everris specialty products
- \$100 NZ horticultural magazine subscription for one year.

The AGMARDT Market Innovation Project:

- First (\$5,000): Patrick Malley
- Second (\$2,500): Sarah Fenwick
- Third (\$1,500): Paul Robinson
- Consolation prizes (\$500 for each completed project): Caitlin Thorburn, Jacqui Jones and Nicolas Muir.



Fig. 3 Nicolas Muir (left) with Andrew Keaney (right), receiving his T&G Practical Activities Award certificate.

The T&G (Turners & Growers) Best Practical Activities Award:

- Nicolas Muir (Fig. 3) won a \$3,500 travel scholarship for best overall score for practical activities.

The Fruitfed Supplies Leadership Award, for the finalist who demonstrates outstanding promise and leadership during the competition:



Fig. 4 Sarah Fenwick, winner of the Bayer Best Practice Award, with Holger Detje, Country Manager Bayer Crop Science.

- Patrick Malley who won a \$2,500 scholarship towards a Leadership or Outward Bound course.

The Primary ITO Career Development Award, of a \$3,000 scholarship for further study or attending a conference:

- Patrick Malley.

The Bayer Best Practice Award, for the highest score in a range of activities with a focus on crop management practices and sustainability received a \$2,500 scholarship:

- Sarah Fenwick (Fig. 4).

The Best Speech Award, \$500 cash:

- Caitlin Thorburn.

The Young Horticulturist of the Year competition is generously partnered by AGMARDT, Fruitfed Supplies, and T&G (Turners & Growers), and is supported by Bayer Crop Science, Countdown, Massey University, NZ Gardener magazine, NZ Winegrowers, and Primary ITO.

The RNZIH Education Trust is a not for profit, charitable trust which oversees the organisation of the Young Horticulturist of the Year.

2014 Young Horticulturist of the Year finalists' biographies

Patrick Malley, Horticulture NZ finalist



A former NZ national rally champion 30 year-old Patrick co-owns a kiwifruit and avocado orchard in Northland. He loves horticulture because no week is

ever the same. One day may see him managing avocado crews picking for the export market, the next working on a kiwifruit structure conversion, as well as helping his staff in their development.

Patrick won the Horticulture NZ 2014 Young Grower of the Year competition and says, "After scraping through in a tie-breaker against some tough Bay of Plenty competitors in the regional final of the Young Grower of the Year competition, I realised that in addition to competing for myself, I could help raise awareness of horticulture in the Northland region." He prepared himself for the challenging questions and tasks that are integral to the Young Horticulturist of the Year experience and says that if you do manage to win the competition you know you achieved it against the best competitors in New Zealand and against some very difficult challenges.

Patrick's goal was, naturally, to win, however he is committed to retaining a

supportive, fun environment because, "We will all end up representing our industry into the future and we will all hopefully get a chance to work together in the future."

He also hopes that he will be able to encourage more young people into the horticulture industry and show them that there is a bright future for them beyond seasonal employment.

Patrick enjoyed support from the Northland and Bay of Plenty horticulture industry and is thankful to Horticulture NZ, the Bay of Plenty Young Grower competition organisers, Zespri and NZ Kiwifruit Growers Inc.

"You cannot be too prepared for this competition and I really appreciate all the support that I receive from the horticulture industry," he says. Patrick's latest challenge is being a first-time dad.

**Sarah Fenwick,
NZ Recreation Association finalist**



Sarah says her grandmother is responsible for the green gene that led this 30 year-old finalist into the garden scene, first through WINTEC then MIT, both in the North Island. Sarah is now settled in Dunedin where she works for Delta, a large infrastructure company, and with ten others makes up Delta's dedicated amenity gardening team. Her success in winning the NZ Recreation Association's Amenity Young Horticulturist of the Year placed her as one of the six finalists for the 2014 Young Horticulturist of the Year.

Sarah had heard of the competition and did some voluntary work experience with a previous finalist at the Hamilton Public Gardens during her National Certificate in Horticulture. However, it was a past tutor from MIT's School of Horticulture who encouraged her to enter this year.

Working in the green space division at Delta, Sarah and other amenity gardeners are responsible for all council amenity gardens, hedges, feature trees, beach front vegetation, re-vegetation sites, recreation parks and reserves. "Dunedin has beautiful public spaces; well thought out and full of interesting collections," says Sarah. "The town belt, peninsula and coastline alongside historical architecture make for a very aesthetically pleasing work environment."

Sarah worked on time management and improving her confidence levels as she prepared for the competition and is furthering her management and business skills through the

Otago Polytechnic Business School. She believes that Dunedin can lead New Zealand in sustainable practices within the amenity horticulture industry.

Sarah has the support of her managers at Delta, as well as her partner, Mitch. "I'll be the first to admit I am easily distracted. I am a gardener and will find any excuse to get into the garden," she explains. Mitch took on the role of time management guru to ensure she was working on competition preparation and not sneaking outside to the garden.

In her precious spare time, Sarah enjoys developing her own amenity garden, maintaining the vegetable patch and working with the local community garden. "Nature, and getting in amongst it is good for the soul".

**Jacqui Jones,
Nursery and Garden Industry NZ
finalist**



Nursery and Garden Industry NZ competition winner Jacqui Jones' interest in the event was supported by her manager at Invercargill's Evandale Gardens as a good networking and career development opportunity.

"I enjoyed the whole thing, despite some nerves when it came to the speech section," says Jacqui. Winning Nursery and Garden's Hort Fert Young Achiever competition also placed her as a finalist in the 2014 Young Horticulturist of the Year competition.

Now in Sales and Marketing, Jacqui began her career working in Evandale's rose department. "I loved

working with perennials the most, but long term I was working towards a career in sales and marketing," she explains.

Jacqui is qualified with Level 4 Advanced Nursery Production and Level 4 Advanced Production Horticulture. She has recently become an accredited work place assessor so she can mentor and assist other staff working towards horticultural qualifications. With her eyes set on upper management in the industry Jacqui plans to complete her National Diploma in Agribusiness Management through Primary ITO.

Jacqui saw the AGMARDT Innovation Project as the most challenging aspect of the competition, and is developing her project ideas. Jacqui and her husband live on ten acres just outside Invercargill, which they share with horses, cows and chickens. When she's not working, you'll find Jacqui riding motocross on weekends, or sledding and racing in the snow with her own team of huskies.

Jacqui believes that personal satisfaction and pride in what you do is vital to a happy, healthy lifestyle. "My husband is a fantastic source of motivation, and we work as a team to achieve our goals."

**Nicolas Muir,
Landscaping New Zealand finalist**



Originally from South Otago, and now based in Christchurch, Nic entered City Parks Services 2014 Young Landscaper of the Year competition to test his skills, but also with the aim of winning it.

He says that the experience was good for his CV as well as for industry

recognition. Nic's employers, Artworks Landscapes Ltd, were also confident in his ability to tackle the competition as he is one of their top foremen.

Nic researched key areas in preparation for the various competition activities and met with leading Christchurch landscaping companies who supported him in the months leading up to the November final.

Nic says his inspiration is being part of an industry that he's passionate about, and his goal is "to do everything that I do to the best of my ability." The competition helped Nic gain and broaden his skills including management, and leadership. With more than 10 years experience in the landscape industry, and a certificate in landscape construction and design from Otago Polytechnic, his long term goal is to manage his own landscape design and construction business.

His supportive wife and two young sons helped Nic balance family life with mountain biking, while preparing for the competition.

**Paul Robinson,
NZ Winegrowers finalist**



When Paul Robinson stepped up to receive the award for Young Viticulturist of the Year earlier in 2014, it capped off four years of hard work.

This determined 27 year-old had competed three times before and it was on his fourth attempt that he took the coveted title, and in doing so won a place in the finals of the 2014 Young Horticulturist of the Year competition.

With 160 hectares of Villa Maria vineyards to manage, Paul's days change with the seasons. His role

as an assistant vineyard manager includes maintenance, monitoring, machinery operation, supervision, and planning.

Originally from Taranaki, Paul moved to the Hawkes Bay in 2004 and has worked for Villa Maria for seven years. "Villa Maria have had two winners of the Young Horticulturist of the Year so it has been a goal for a while," he says. Between 2006 and 2012, five viticulturists have won the competition, the most recent being Braden Crosby.

Paul says the biggest challenge was learning the wide range of horticulture topics that he was not as familiar with, but his proven strategy was to, "Give it everything I've got, and do as well as I can." He tapped into the experience of previous winners from the Viticulture sector to guide him on his AGMARDT project as well as gaining tips for handling the two-day competition in November.

Paul was well supported by his partner Jess, his parents in Taranaki and the Villa Maria team.

When Paul's not walking the vineyard you'll find this committed sports man on the paddocks playing rugby or touch.

**Caitlin Thorburn,
FLONZI & NZ Flower Growers
finalist**



Caitlin Thorburn comes to the Young Horticulturist of the Year with international experience, having competed in WorldSkills 2009 in Canada against 18 of the world's top florists. This year she won an

Excellence Award at the Ellerslie International Flower Show.

Caitlin's worked at flowers Manuela in Wellington for four years before moving to Amsterdam where she enjoyed catering to the European love of flowers for two years. In recent months Caitlin has shared her skills in roles with United Flower Growers and now with Aromaunga Flowers in Christchurch.

This entrepreneurial finalist has also been developing an online commission based floristry business specialising in events. Caitlin says that development of her website business was on hold while she focused on representing the Floriculture sector in the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition. "I'm a very chilled out, fun loving person and I am happy to help knit my industry together more, from grower to shop," Caitlin explains.

Her down-to-earth attitude carried her through planning for the competition. She talked to some previous floristry finalists in the competition as part of her preparation, to give her an idea of what to expect.

Having changed jobs and cities three months before the competition, Caitlin said her biggest challenge was the time frame, including research for her AGMARDT Market Innovation Project which was a media concept designed to link growers and florists in the industry that she loves. She's also eager to help educate kiwis about the time, care and skill that goes into growing flowers ready for market. Changing how people think about buying flowers is part of this; "They don't just have to be a gift for someone, they can be something beautiful to take home with your groceries."

Her support team include her parents along with her employer, FLONZI and Joy and Garry Knight in Christchurch.

Caitlin applies her creative spirit to her costume design and gardening. "I also enjoy life's simple pleasures, like riding a bike in the sunshine, listening to bird song, and watching sunsets."