

2019 Young Horticulturist Competition

The Young Horticulturist Competition provides an opportunity for both personal and professional growth for young leaders within the wider horticultural sectors. It is these leaders who will inspire the future within the industry and those around them to ensure that the New Zealand horticultural industry stays ahead of the world with innovation.

The competition is an important event on the yearly calendar as it is the only event in New Zealand that brings all the horticultural sectors together to network and celebrate success.

We at the RNZIH Education Trust, who run the event, are immensely proud of our achievement in 2019, as we celebrated the 15th year that this competition has been held. That means 15 years of leaders who have grown through this event and who have given back to the industry from their leanings.

Elle Anderson, RNZIH Education Trust Chairperson

The overall winner of New Zealand's Young Horticulturist Competition for 2019 is Simon Gourley, employed by Domain Thomson Wines in Central Otago.



Simon Gourley (centre), winner of the Young Horticulturist Competition 2019, holding his award trophy. Alongside him (left to right) are Duncan Fletcher (Fruited Supplies), Andrew Keaney (T&G), Steve Sexton (Countdown), and Malcolm Nitschke (AGMARDT).

On 13th and 14th November, Simon competed with five other finalists from different sectors of the horticulture industry in the grand final of the competition. The first day was Practical Components day held at the Pukekohe Indian Association Centre, followed the next day by a series of indoor business-focused challenges including presentation of competitors' AGMARDT projects, a computer-based project and, in the evening, individual short speeches to a large audience at the awards dinner.



Finalists in the 2019 Young Horticulturist Competition alongside Duncan Fletcher from Fruited Supplies; (left to right) Simon Gourley, Jono Sutton, Jessie Wakeling, Duncan Fletcher (centre), Anika Jackson, George Trower, Rico Mannall.

The competition assesses contestants' abilities across multiple skills reflecting the diversity of disciplines demanded by a modern career in horticulture, including innovative product design, market research, public speaking, interviews with judges and a series of wide-ranging practical and knowledge-based activities and challenges.

1st Place: Simon Gourley



Simon Gourley (left) being presented with his winner's trophy by Steve Sexton (right) from Countdown.

Simon is vineyard manager at Domain Thomson Wines where there's a strong focus on organics, biodynamic farming and sustainability. With a degree in viticulture and oenology from Lincoln University he has winery and vineyard experience in New Zealand, Australia and France. Earlier in the year Simon was winner of NZ Wine's 2019 Young Viticulturist of the Year competition. As well as his unique winner's trophy Simon received a \$7,500 travel and accommodation package, \$1,000 from ICL Specialty Fertilizers, a one-year membership to the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural & Horticultural Science and a selection of Aorangi Merchant products. Simon was also awarded a \$3,500 travel scholarship for the T&G Practical Components Award, a \$1,500 3rd prize for his AGMARDT project and a \$500 Countdown Award.

2nd Place: Rico Mannall



Rico Mannall presenting his winning speech.

Rico is business development and marketing manager for Southern Woods Nursery in Christchurch and earned his place in the grand final by winning the NZ Plant Producers Inc. Young Achiever 2019 competition. With a Commerce and Arts degree from the University of Canterbury, Rico works closely with key stakeholders and industry partners on plant supply projects around the South Island. For gaining second place Rico won a \$5,500 study scholarship from Massey University, \$750 from ICL Specialty Fertilizers and a one-year membership to the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural & Horticultural Science. Rico was also awarded \$5,000 as 1st prize for his AGMARDT project 'Plastic Free Native Tree' which analysed the potential for a sustainable zero-waste solution to the production, shipping and planting of native trees for revegetation projects. He also took home a \$2,500 scholarship towards a leadership or Outward Bound course for winning the Fruited Supplies Leadership Award, \$500 for the best speech and a \$500 Countdown Award.

3rd Place: Jonathan Sutton



Jono Sutton during the Practical Components day.

Jono plays many roles on the family farm in Nelson, leading it into the future, including staff supervision, long term planning, packhouse management, repairs, maintenance and more. He earned his place in the grand final by winning Horticulture New Zealand's 2019 Young Grower of the Year. As third place-getter, Jono received \$1,000 cash, \$500 from ICL Specialty Fertilizers and a one-year membership of the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural & Horticultural Science. He was also awarded the \$2,500 scholarship Bayer Best Practice Award, \$1,500 for the Horticulture Trust Community Engagement Award, a \$500 Countdown Award and \$500 for his AGMARDT project.

George Trower



George Trower (left) being congratulated by Adam Fleck (right) for his scholarship with the Primary ITO.

George is landscape foreman with Goom Landscapes in Christchurch. Growing up on a Waikato farm he gained a love for the environment and landscape, and went on to complete a degree in landscape architecture in Christchurch. He earned a place in the grand final by becoming the Registered Master Landscapers NZ 2019 Young Landscaper of the Year. George was awarded the Primary Industry Training Organisation Career Development Award which is a \$3,000 scholarship towards future studies, and has been adopted as a Primary ITO ambassador. He also took home a \$500 Countdown Award and \$500 from AGMARDT for his project.

Anika Jackson



Anika Jackson pruning during the Practical Components day.

Anika has advanced certificates in Level 4 Landscape Construction and Sustainable Horticulture and is a team leader for Delta Utility Services in Dunedin, maintaining council contracted parks and reserves. Anika was awarded the \$2,500 2nd prize for her AGMARDT project and a \$500 Countdown Award.

Jessie Wakeling



Jessie Wakeling during the Practical Components day.

Jessie is a fully qualified florist at Soul Flower in Karaka, with a Level 4 certificate in Small Business Management. She earned her place in the competition through Floristry New Zealand Inc. Jessie was awarded a \$500 Countdown Award and \$500 for her AGMARDT project.

Sponsors and award details

The AGMARDT Market Innovation Project

The aim of the Agricultural and Marketing Research and Development Trust (AGMARDT) project is for competitors to analyse and report on a market innovation opportunity that they have identified in the horticulture industry.

This challenge is designed to stretch contestants' abilities to innovate, develop sound business models and add value to the industry.

T&G Practical Components Award

This \$3,500 travel scholarship goes to the finalist who receives the best overall score for the practical component challenges in the competition.

Fruitfed Supplies Leadership Award

The finalist who demonstrates outstanding leadership during the competition receives a \$2,500 scholarship towards a leadership or Outward Bound course.

Countdown Award

This award goes to each competitor as a reward for their perseverance and commitment to the competition.

Bayer Best Practice Award

This \$2,500 award goes to the finalist who receives the highest score in those activities within the grand final with a focus on crop management and sustainability practices.

Primary ITO Career Development Award

The winner of this award receives a \$3,000 scholarship to assist with further study or to attend a conference, and is adopted as a Primary ITO ambassador to promote training and career pathways in horticulture.

Horticulture Trust Community Engagement Award

This \$1,500 award goes to a competitor that shows strong engagement in the community.

Thank you to our community of supporters!

The Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture Education Trust sincerely thanks the following companies and individuals for their generous support:

Official Partners of the 2019 Young Horticulturist Competition:

AGMARDT, T&G, Fruitfed Supplies, Countdown.

Young Horticulturist Supporters:

Bayer CropScience, Horticulture Charitable Trust, Primary ITO, Trillian Trust, New Zealand Institute of Agricultural & Horticultural Science (NZIAHS).

Young Horticulturist Affiliated Supporters:

ANZ, Horticulture New Zealand, Manukau Institute of Technology, Massey University, NZ Wine, AIM Services (Amenities and Infrastructure Maintenance Services), Safeworx, Outback Trading Company, Norwood, NZ Hothouse, NZ Gardener magazine, ICL Specialty Fertilizers, Jacson³.

Friends of the Competition:

Auckland Botanic Gardens, Bev McConnell, Bahco, Cornwall Park Trust, Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture, Aorangi Merchants, Kiwiflora, Hill Laboratories, Villa Maria, Roots Shoots & Fruits, Biostart, The Tractor Centre.

A huge thank you to all those who volunteered as judges, helpers and runners during the competition and those who worked hard in the background making sure things went according to plan.

The competition is managed by the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture Education Trust.