

Propagation, Industry, and Education

Grant Hayman

Rakaunui Nurseries Ltd, No 7 RD, Oamaru

At present, I am studying for NDH (National Diploma in Horticulture specialising in nursery production). I have completed 2 years as a student at Aoraki Polytechnic and now have a full-time job as nursery propagator for the above nursery. I will discuss my experiences, thoughts, and facts on the present and future of education in horticulture especially in propagation.

At present we have diverse and fragmented forms of training and education within the industry. Starting with secondary education and working up:

- High schools: School Certificate in Horticulture and 6th Form Certificate in Horticulture
- Polytechnics and other providers: TOPS (Training Opportunities Programme). These are short-term courses up to 12 weeks on the basics.
- Trade Certificate Board: TCB (Apprenticeships). Training within the workplace.
- RNZIH (Royal New Zealand Institute in Horticulture). These qualifications are taught in various Polytechnics throughout New Zealand and include:

CHT (Certificate in Horticulture Theory)

NCH (National Certificate in Horticulture)

NDH (National Diploma in Horticulture)

NDH Honours

These courses, as in my case, can be done by correspondence and do require a certain amount of practical experience.

- Universities and Polytechnics: Advanced diplomas degrees and honours.

The present systems cover their area of qualification reasonably well, but as there are a number of authorities involved in administration they each have different sets of standards and criteria. As students, we have problems getting recognition of prior learning by other administering bodies.

The industry has raised questions about the levels of tuition and qualification being taught by various institutions. In reading the transcripts of the meetings of the New Zealand Region of I.P.P.S. last year, there is record of some discussion on this topic and some concern. Also, the educationalists are looking to find a better system that provides them with more industry input and brings all qualifications and training into one aligned system.

A new group, called the ITO (New Zealand Horticulture Industries Training Organisation Inc.), has been set up to amalgamate all the qualifications, training,

and education under one body. This organisation is to set standards of attainment for the students and trainees and also to set standards that the institution are to meet.

Firstly, institutions have to be accredited, that is, visited with inspection of facilities and student support systems checked, tutors' qualifications accepted and the general training programme approved. All this is done by the NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority) which is made up of educators and industry representatives covering all facets of horticulture.

At the end of 1994, TCB, NCH, NDH, and CHT will cease to exist and there will be no more apprenticeships.

What will take its place is a set of units of learning standards from 1 through 8. There will be requirements to master to reach each standard.

Here is an example of the proposed future system along side the existing systems.

<u>Present Systems</u>	<u>Proposed Future Systems</u>
	Levels
High School Certificate	1
6th Form Certificate	2
TOPS	3
TCB	4
CHT	4
NCH	5
NDH	6
NDH Honours	7
University Degree/Diploma	8

As an example, there will be 200 units up to level 4 registered by November 1993 covering all facets of horticulture. Level 4 will be equivalent to the present NDH and levels above 6 will be advanced diplomas and degrees. Units for levels 5-7 are to be registered by June 1994.

All these units of learning are to be contestable and will be tendered for by the different institutions that are accredited to teach to the various levels.

Not only is theory instruction involved in these standards, but also a high proportion of practical experience and teaching. Registered practical assessors appointed by the ITO will monitor the progress of students through the practical on-job aspects of the components of their studies. These assessors will come from within the industry as people involved in the present running of a particular aspect of horticulture.

Also a cross reference or RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) is to be put in place so that training at one institution can be accredited at another institution to enable further training or study without the risk of being penalised. Also everyone will be aware of what each standard module unit or level stands for and the qualification and teaching will be standard throughout all institutions or providers.

This in my mind should eliminate a lot of the confusion and frustration felt within the industry, by student trainees, and by educators/administrators.

Members of I.P.P.S. and those from within the horticultural industry can and should have involvement and input into this new direction in education. To ensure that the content, emphasis, and qualifications are what the industry needs and demands we should have an involvement. I feel that because propagation is such

an important and integral part of every aspect of horticulture, its profile should be raised and covered adequately both theoretically and on a practical basis in this new form of education.

In the Aoraki region we have a General Advisory Committee to the Rural Studies Centre of Aoraki Polytechnic. Under this we have a subcommittee of horticulture. The membership is comprised of representatives from all aspects of horticulture, e.g.; turf, landscaping, floriculture, fruit production, vegetable production, nursery both open ground and container, and parks and reserves.

I have been a representative on this committee formerly as a student representative and presently as an industry representative. This committee provides support to the tutors and has a large input into what and how the students are taught in the course at Aoraki Polytechnic.

I have found this involvement stimulating, interesting, and rewarding, and I would encourage all members to seek out their line of involvement in the area of education. The students and trainees of today are the industry of tomorrow.

For the continuation of the good standing of I.P.P.S., for the development of horticulture as an industry, and propagation as an important part of horticulture let us uphold the motto we have "To Seek and Share."