

Fifty Years of Change in a Family Run Production Nursery and a Brief Overview of the Industry as We Have Seen It

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Summary

Joy Plants is a well-known New Zealand nursery started by Terry and Pamela Hatch in the 1960's. A wide range of plants has been produced by Joy Plants throughout the years, with plant trends leading to diversifi-

cation in main production lines. Landscaping and even beehive supply to kiwifruit orchards has shown how this successful family nursery has adapted to change over 50 years.

INTRODUCTION

Joy Plants was established in 1965 in the backyard of a rental in Mangere while working at Pettit's Nursery.

We set up in Manurewa in 1967. Site 3 was purchased and established in 1972 in Run-ciman Road, Pukekohe. Site 4 starts set up in 1992 in Jericho Road, Pukekohe. Site 5

was purchased in 2018 in Parker Lane, Pukekohe. A new plan.

Manurewa was a small nursery with various lines being grown for landscaping purposes, which was an extra revenue while Terry was foreman for Pettit's Nursery. Growing mainly alpines and small rockery species and anything that could be salvaged from gardens that were being worked on.

Joy Plants would take full swing with the purchase of land in a rural part of Pukekohe known as Pukekohe East on Run-ciman Road. Starting off small and slowly growing on its four-acre land parcel from 1972 to 1997, established by Terence and Pamela Hatch. Staff numbers ranged from zero to three at any one given time not including themselves. Terry would be a part of the first ever New Zealand meetings and a founder member of IPPS New Zealand, a major part of his nursery production life. Plants were produced by cutting, seed, and division, and grown in PBs. Soil mix was made by hand with spade and barrow from pumice, sand and peat, lime, and various other forms of fertiliser. A computer would be bought in 1982 because this was the way of the future - a Commodore 64 so we could print labels of plants at shows and do plant lists for mail orders.

Production would be mainly a range of perennials rock plants and small bulbs and over the years an increase of other lines - a selection of small Australian shrubs and perennials and a selection of small rockery natives. This included a range of small growing flaxes that would be named and grown by Terry, that would continue to be a popular line for many in the industry for years to come. Sale of plants would be through plant/pet shops and retail nurseries around the North Island with road trips in a

little blue Morris Minor to nurseries around Auckland and Hamilton by Pam and longer road trips by Terry as far north as Kaitaia and south to New Plymouth. Bus parties and garden groups would be a regular occurrence as the nursery became more known after displays and sales at various flower and garden shows.

Bulbs would become a big part of the nursery, especially African species. Two such varieties would become another string to the nursery bow and the little but short-lived cut flower production business would start up Bevlynn Bulbs growing *Nerine* and *Zantedeschia*, or calla lily, for cut flowers from an extensive breeding programme - one even featuring on a New Zealand stamp. There was also a dry bulb mail order list boasting over two hundred species of bulbs, many rare and endangered at the time. Over summer months most of these would need lifting, cleaning, and packaging before stock and excess bulbs were replanted. The use of tissue cultures, some of the first in New Zealand, would play a major part in increase of calla corms to increase some of our selected colour forms. This was also going to be a life changer for plant production and our cut flower business - or was it? If this was not enough, by the 1980's we would be doing landscaping again, and as a sideline provision of beehives for local kiwi fruit orchards, reaching almost one hundred hives for pollination purposes.

Production of natives for revegetation projects would also start in the 1980's due to the lack of suppliers. We would soon have one of the largest selections on the market. These were mainly for one project that would continue for thirty-two years, the growing and planting of more than 650,000 trees on Mercury Island. This would see the

need for expansion once again, the purchase of 24 acres in Jericho Road in 1992 and the increase of the Hatch clan. Perennials would still play a part in the nursery, but the bulb market hit a downturn, and many would not make the transition to the new site due to various reasons - vermin being one, time of work required and lack of interest by gardeners. Also, the need to increase native plant production with more local farmers requiring natives, a few more projects further afield, and an increase of natives in private gardens would see us increase our native ornamental production for landscape use.

The late 1990's to the present day 2020's has not seen much major change in our growing style, just an increase in volume. We are still a family business, now with three partners and two extra workers of which one is extended family. We grow what we like, and we sell what we can to those we like and those who pay their bills. Plants are now grown in hard plastic pots in a potting mix made of pumice, sand and pine bark, dolomite lime and long-life composite fertilisers. Not mixed by hand now but by rotary hoe on a tractor - simple but it works. 2018 has seen us purchase 44 acres with the intention to increase contract grown production. Who knows what is around the corner? One would hope more plant breeding and production of worthy plants for the masses, but one step at a time.