

Horticentre Hawke's Bay Horticulturalist of the Year

2026 Entry Information Pack

Presented within the Napier Port Hawke's Bay Primary Sector Awards

Recognising excellence, innovation, and sustainable horticulture in Hawke's Bay.

Celebrate your growing excellence - and share your story with Hawke's Bay.

1. Overview & Purpose

The Hawke's Bay A&P Society owns and manages the Napier Port Hawke's Bay Primary Sector Awards, which celebrate excellence, success, innovation, and growth across Hawke's Bay's rural industries. These awards have a long history of telling the story of excellence within rural Hawke's Bay and play an important role in recognising leadership, innovation, and contribution across the sector.

The Horticentre Hawke's Bay Horticulturalist of the Year Award recognises an outstanding individual or business operating within the horticultural sector who demonstrates high standards of practice, leadership, and long-term sustainability.

The purpose of this award is to identify, acknowledge, and celebrate horticulturalists who contribute positively to Hawke's Bay's primary industries and wider community, and who exemplify excellence in horticultural production and management.

2. Why Enter?

Entering the Horticulturalist of the Year is an opportunity to gain recognition for your contribution to the horticultural sector and share your story with the wider primary industry.

All entrants:

- Are invited to attend the Primary Sector Awards Dinner
- Connect with peers, growers, sponsors, and industry leaders
- Contribute to celebrating and strengthening Hawke's Bay's primary industries
- Receive an annual membership to the Hawke's Bay A&P Society

Winner receives:

- Recognition as the 2026 Horticentre Hawke's Bay Horticulturalist of the Year at the Primary Sector Awards Dinner, acknowledged in front of industry peers
- The Apsey White Trophy (originally donated by Apsey White & Co in 1915) and a cash prize of \$1,500 cash
- The opportunity to host a Field Day on their property to showcase their horticultural operation
- The opportunity to share your story and gain recognition across the wider sector
- Entry into a respected alumni network of past winners

- Feature media coverage and industry networking opportunities as the year's leading Hawke's Bay horticultural professional

3. Eligibility & Entry Conditions

The competition is open to horticulturalists operating within the Hawke's Bay region, as defined by the Hawke's Bay Regional Council boundary.

Entrants must:

- Be a horticulture grower as defined by Horticulture New Zealand, including landowners, lessees and managers
- Operate within a horticultural business that is a full-time operation for at least one person
- Be pursuing a system of horticulture that maintains high and sustainable performance over the long term
- Be available to participate in the judging process, including a site visit if shortlisted
- Be available for media enquiries and promotional opportunities if announced as the winner
- Agree to host a Field Day approximately 4 weeks after the Primary Sector Awards Dinner (or a time that suits the winner and Hawke's Bay A&P Society), organised and managed by the Hawke's Bay A&P Society, if announced as the winner
- Ensure they meet all eligibility requirements before beginning their online entry

Entries may be submitted by business owners, managers, or authorised representatives.

4. Entry Criteria

The Horticentre Hawke's Bay Horticulturalist of the Year will demonstrate strength across the following areas:

- Innovation and adoption of good horticultural practice
- Resilience and adaptability within the horticultural sector
- Leadership within the business or wider horticultural community
- Education, learning, and knowledge sharing
- Social and community contribution

These criteria align with the areas considered during judging.

5. Judging Criteria & Process

Judging will be carried out by a panel of independent industry judges with expertise across horticulture, business, and sustainability.

The judging process will include:

- Review of written entry material
- A site visit to shortlisted entrants

Entrants will be evaluated across five key areas:

Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas, creative thinking, and leadership in adopting new technologies
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of innovative systems, marketing strategies, or value-optimising practices
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptability in managing challenges such as climate variability, markets, and risk Long-term sustainability planning, governance, and forward-thinking management
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated industry leadership, mentoring, and professional development Commitment to community or industry-good initiatives
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for skills training, mentoring, and knowledge sharing within the industry Dedication to lifelong learning and stewardship for others
Social Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement in health, wellbeing, and community involvement Promotion of collaboration, inclusion, and a positive culture within the horticultural sector

How Judging Works

- After entries close, the judging panel will review all submissions
- Short-listed entrants will take part in an on-site assessment
- Final results will reflect both your entry submission and the site visit assessment
- The winner will be announced at the Primary Sector Awards Dinner and will later host a Field Day

6. What You Need to Prepare Before Entering

To help you prepare, the online entry form will ask for the following types of information:

Entrant Information	<p>This section captures basic details about the entrant, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact details Key business information (location, ownership structure, staffing)
Horticultural Operation Overview	<p>A brief summary outlining your horticultural operation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crops grown and scale Key practices and production systems Land layout and operational focus
Professional Story & Goals	<p>This section captures key information that helps judges understand your professional journey, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A written statement about your achievements and contribution Key developments and goals for your horticultural career or business Opportunities for future growth or innovation
Supporting Material	<p>You may upload any supporting material that strengthens your entry, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies, plans, reports, or articles Relevant documents that show innovation or development Any other relevant documents referenced in your application
Images	<p>Please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 5 high-resolution landscape-oriented images of your property At least one of yourself and/or your team <p>Images should represent your orchard, systems, and environment.</p>

	Only submit images you are comfortable being used for promotional purposes.
Supplier List	<p>Please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of your key business suppliers (e.g., transport operators, advisors, service providers) to be used for media purposes if you are announced as the winner

You will be asked to enter this information directly into the form, and upload the required files where applicable.

All submitted material will be kept confidential unless used for agreed promotional purposes. Runner-up names will remain anonymous.

7. How to Enter

1. Complete the online entry form
2. Upload the required files listed in "What You Need to Prepare Before Entering" as part of your online entry
3. After submitting your entry, shortlisted entrants will be contacted by the judging panel to arrange an on-site visit or interview
4. Be available to attend the Awards Dinner (2 April 2026) and Field Day (date TBC) if you win

8. Key Dates - 2026

Entries Open	1 October 2025
Entries Close	28 February 2026
Judging	March 2026
Primary Sector Awards Dinner	2 April 2026
Field Day	Date TBC

9. Contact

For questions or more information, contact:

Kahlia Ritchie – Event Manager, Napier Port Hawke's Bay Primary Sector Awards

Email: psa@hbap.co.nz Phone: 027 342 6071

10. Acknowledging Our Sponsors

With thanks to Napier Port, Horticentre, and our valued sponsors who make these awards possible.