

Horticultural Curriculum Vitae

Dr. Keith Hammett
Plant Breeder - New Zealand

6 February 2014

Full Name

Keith Richard William Hammett

Born

24th April 1942 Epsom, Surrey, England.

Nationality

New Zealand

Residence

488c, Don Buck Road, Massey, Auckland 0614 New Zealand.

Occupation

Private Plant Breeder [as from September 1993]

Formerly Scientist, Horticulture and Food Research Institute of New Zealand Ltd.

Early Background in Britain

Both grandfathers were professional gardeners in Britain. Father was keen amateur gardener. Took up gardening as a hobby while a teenager. Exhibited at the national shows of various specialist horticultural societies in London while still at school. Received much encouragement from top showmen of the day. Served on the committee of the National Sweet Pea Society while at University. Have retained strong ongoing linkages with British scene. Life member National Sweet Pea Society.

Education

B.Sc [Hons] Southampton. Botany 1960-63

Ph.D. Southampton. Plant Pathology 1963-66

New Zealand - Post 1967

In 1967, immigrated to New Zealand with wife and family.

Quickly became involved with local horticultural scene and was involved with the organisation of the joint trade/enthusiast run "Garden Weeks" held in 1968 and 1970.

Has written regularly for horticultural publications worldwide in addition to scientific papers [over 150]. Five books published to date, plus two updated editions.

In 1973 acquired a 10 acre [4ha] property and built a house/research unit near Auckland. The grounds have been developed as an arboretum and have enabled the development of a series of breeding programmes involving *Lathyrus*, polyanthus, carnations, *Dianthus*, dahlias, *Helianthus* and chrysanthemum and more recently *Amaryllis*, *Arthropodium*, *Clivia*, *Cosmos*, *Petunia*, *Mimulus*, *Nemesia*, *Sandersonia* and *Zantedeschia*.

Close working relationships have been maintained with the Auckland Regional Botanic Garden, the University of Auckland, Unitec Institute of Technology, The Horticulture and Food Research Institute of New Zealand Ltd., The New Zealand Institute for Industrial Research and Development, Lower Hutt and Massey University, Palmerston North.

To date in excess of 300 fully commercial cultivars have been produced. Many of these have been exhibited and marketed in overseas countries.

Major achievements to date have included:

The development of two bicoloured strains and a flake series of sweet pea.

The first significant integration of genes from other *Lathyrus* species into the sweet pea.

The development of high quality border carnations.

The development of an exciting range of compact sweetly scented, repeat flowering dianthus.

The introduction of yellow pigment into *Dianthus plumarius*.

The development of a dark leaved strain of *Dahlia*.

The development of "Showpiece Hybrid", "Baby Series" and "Silk Symphony" seed strains of *Dahlia*.

The development of clonal exhibition cultivars of *Dahlia* which have won top trial ground and show bench awards around the world.

The development of the "Baby Dahl", "Dahling", "Species Hybrid" and Mystic series of clonal *Dahlia*.

The development of the "Magic Carpet" strain of dwarf chrysanthemums.

The development of the "Loyalty" and "Pirouette" series of *Petunia*

The development of dwarf *Helianthus salicifolius*.

The establishment of an extensive *Clivia* collection.

The development of the Seaview Gem series of perennial *Nemesia*.

The development of silver laced polyanthus.

Other activities include:

Resolution of the history of the development of the Japanese Musk Melon. [Published February 1998 The Garden, Journal of The Royal Horticultural Society 123(2) 86-89.]

Special advisor to Eastern Plantation Agency, Malaysia concerning horticultural diversification 1987

Consultant to Lindridge Group, Zimbabwe August 1998

Joint supervisor for ongoing MSc and PhD topics, School of Biological Sciences, University of Auckland and Massey University, Palmerston North.

In recent years has travelled widely overseas. Frequent guest speaker, especially Australia, USA & UK.

- Elected Fellow of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture 1986
- Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Plant Breeding Medal 1988
- American Dahlia Society Gold Medal for Breeding and Literature 1988
- National Dahlia Society [Britain] Overseas Raiser Award 1990
- Silver Medal National Dahlia Society of New Zealand 1992
- First Honorary Fellow of The Horticulture and Food Research Institute of New Zealand 1993
- Elected Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture 1994
- Awarded Special Award for Outstanding Service to the Dahlia jointly by Victorian National Dahlia Society and the Australian Dahlia Council 1994
- Finalist Floriculturist of the Year 1995
- Designated Horticultural Ambassador Waitakere City February 1996
- Awarded Henry Eckford Gold Memorial Medal. National Sweet Pea Society. UK 1996
- Runner-up Floriculturist of the Year 1997
- Chief Judge 60th Anniversary Joint National Show, National Dahlia Society of New Zealand, Tauranga 1998
- Awarded illuminated scroll National Dahlia Society (UK) for outstanding services to the Dahlia 1999
- Awarded Waitakere City Millennium Medal for services to the environment December 1999
- Keynote speaker Australian National Dahlia Conference, April 2000, Melbourne.
- Keynote speaker Kayokai Summer Seminar, July 2000, Tokyo.
- Keynote speaker American National Dahlia Society Annual Show, September 2000, Washington.DC.
- Keynote speaker International Rhododendron Conference, New Plymouth, Oct. 2001
- Keynote speaker American National Dahlia Society Annual Show, August 2004, Seattle
- Keynote speaker North American Clivia Society, March 2005, Los Angeles
- Keynote speaker Australian National Dahlia Conference, June 2005, Melbourne
- Keynote speaker at final Australian National Dahlia Conference and inaugural meeting of the Dahlia Society of Australia, June 2010 Shepparton.

- Keynote speaker at the first International Trials Conference, Woking Surrey, organised by the Royal Horticultural Society and the International Society for Horticultural Science. July 2011
- Winner of John Brown Memorial medal at Wisley Dahlia trials UK 2007
- Awarded Queens Service Medal for services to horticulture. New Year's Honours list 2008
- Awarded the Reginald Cory Cup by the Royal Horticultural Society, UK 2008 for work on Dahlias. This is the first time this cup has come to New Zealand in three quarters of a century.
- Awarded the Gold Veitch Memorial Medal by the Royal Horticultural Society, UK 2013 in recognition of services given in the advancement of the science and practice of horticulture.

Formerly Advisory Officer and Chairman Classification Committee. Judging Exam Convener 2002- National Dahlia Society of New Zealand.

Honorary Curator of Dahlias Auckland Regional Botanic Garden

Executive Member National Plant Collections Scheme [New Zealand]

Contributing Editor American Dahlia Society

Collator New Zealand Plant Collections Scheme

Convener of Judges First Ellerslie Flower Show 1994

Chairman, Unitec Institute of Technology, Horticulture Advisory Committee 1997 - 2000

Convener of Science Group, Auckland Regional Botanic Garden, Development Plan Working Party 1997.

Convenor First New Zealand Clivia Exhibition 2002

Vice Patron Auckland Horticultural Council 2002 –2006

Patron Auckland Horticultural Council 2006 -

Gold Medal Winner Ellerslie Flower Show 2003 [Auckland, New Zealand]

Special award for Plant Breeding Ellerslie Flower Show 2003.

Patron New Zealand Clivia Club. 2005.

Member National Pest Plant Accord – Technical Advisory Group – Biosecurity New Zealand 2006 –

President Eden Roskill Camera Club 2007-2009

Treasurer Eden Roskill Camera Club 2009-

Member of New Zealand Cat Fancy Breeds Standards Council 2007/2008

National Chairman of Catz (Inc) [One of two New Zealand Cat registries] 2008-2009

Examiner for Plant Variety Rights Office.

Chairman of committee organizing the Photographic Society of New Zealand National Exhibition 2011.

Treasurer New Zealand Clivia Club 2013-

President of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture 2013-

Research Interests

I firmly believed that New Zealand had the potential to become the “Holland of the South Pacific” based on ornamental horticulture. This belief was based on New Zealand’s natural advantages such as soils and climate and the highest levels of technical skills.

Sadly changes in Government science policy, irrational biosecurity laws and regulations and increasing human population pressure have stultified any such opportunities.

I had said: “We must become a centre of innovation to which the rest of the world looks for new plants”.

Towards this end I had built a team of colleagues in a variety of institutes, each with high technical skills, to look at the various barriers that prevent hybridisation between species in a variety of genera and to look at the basic mechanisms that determine characters such as the expression of flower colour.

I still believe that a plant breeder must be a generalist, who looks at the marketplace in order to define goals, has an overview of the germplasm available and is fully up to date with the opportunities offered by developing technology. “The plant breeder must sit in the middle of the cobweb”

Hope springs eternal.

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