

Strong visitor turn-out kept Christchurch TD buzzing

FANTASTIC,” “BRILLIANT,” “I really enjoyed the day,” “Really great!” were just a few of several mostly unsolicited comments in a similar vein which indicated the success of Autumn Trade Day at Pioneer Stadium in Christchurch on the 25 February.

Kerry Johnstone reports

Although the economic climate was and still is vastly different from last year, both exhibitors and visitors appeared positive and upbeat about the industry and its potential and their own to survive.

And the two new attractions which were added to this year's Trade Day added a big buzz that persisted all day.

At one end of the stadium, world-renowned retail consultant John Stanley, somehow remarkably alert after arriving from Perth after midnight, delivered his three-part series of messages, anecdotes and tips on how to survive and build customer numbers to large and wholly attentive audiences.

Even a few nursery people could be seen sitting in on John's seminars. Robert Appleton of Appletons' Tree Nurseries, Nelson observed that what he heard was quite applicable to his own situation.

At the other end and also to large numbers, several of whom were taking notes, IPPS nursery experts gave practical demonstrations of propagation procedures.

Jeff Elliott of Elliotts Wholesale demonstrated cutting techniques

peppering his spiel with splashes of humour and, in his inimitable style, Eddie Welsh of Starter Plants dealt with bulbs, corms and tubers. Blue Mountain's Denis Hughes, focused on propagation and breeding from seed and Ian Williams of Appletons Tree Nursery demonstrated various facets of budding and grafting.

Some, myself included, assumed that perhaps six or so people would attend these sessions but all the seats were filled with others having to stand. Many people remained to take in more than one session. In other words, never assume! Many also expressed the desire to see a similar programme arranged for Christchurch 2010.

And organiser of the demonstrations, Grant Hayman of Headford Propagators, reported that a great spinoff was that IPPS picked up “at least 10 new members.”

Most areas of the South had been experiencing great growing conditions prior to Trade Day and certainly all the plants on show were in outstanding form and health — so much so that one retailer bought three of the stands in their entire-



Above: there was a steady stream of visitors throughout the day



Above left: Morag McGlinchy of Arcadia with Cordyline Chocolate Mint, a Quality Growers' offering

Above right: Aussie Winner, Superbells Peach, shown by Tracey Burgess of Bayliss Nurseries



Left: John Penny with Thirkettle's new Pittosporum Gold Tips, set for release in Spring

Below left: Elvisii on the Daltons stand -- Gary Clark, Graham Saltiel and Scott Bromwich Centre: Media supplier Roy Rose of Niagara with nursery sample Below right: Arcadia's Sandy Peddie with Quality Grower's Berberis thunbergii Marie





Above left: Colorscape's stand was considered by many to have been the best on the day
Above right: Paul Craddock discusses Bottom Up irrigation with TD visitor Geoff McMillan



ty, making the return home trip for these standholders a much lighter affair indeed.

Among several new plants spotted were Super Sunbells, from the Aussie Winners collection on Bayliss Nurseries stand which also showed the compact Coprosma Golden Glow.

Arcadia's Morag McGlinchy and Sandy Peddie, who also manned the Quality Growers stand, showed variegated Cordyline Chocolate Mint and Berberis Thunbergii Maria.

Red Rebels and Red Leopards

Arcadia itself featured new Phormium Firebird. From Waitati, Blueskin Nursery brought Astelia Red Rebel and Astelia Alpine Ruby and from even farther south, Blue Mountain Nursery centred its new Cornus Greenvale in a bed of Pseudowintera Red Leopard.

Thirkettle Nursery featured Pitosporum Gold Tips and Michelia Misty Mauve, both being readied for Spring release.

Also on the Thirkettle stand was a magnificent, still nameless new cordyline sporting a sign asking people what they thought. It received a positive response from the knowledgeable who called it "a winner".

Now Jackie and John Thirkettle plan to get it into tissue and bulk it up.

Andrew Ketel was very happy to show the new dwarf apple, Blush Babe on Waimea's well-conceived stand. This fruit tree is just the job

for the home gardener on a small section.

Naturally, there are people on the lookout for plants which are not necessarily new.

Among many well worth noting were the well-grown Festuca glauca on Kiwiflora's stand, a large 8 or 9 year-old Mexican Grass Tree (*Dasyliirion longissima*) at Leighs Exotic Plants, a delicate orange-salmon foliaged *Cotinus coggria* from Plantorama, bright cyclamen from Clark's Nursery, a fine *Cornus controversa* on Allenton Nurseries stand and *Coprosma Hot Chocolate* on Headford Propagator's stand.

Although visitors would have liked to have seen even more nurseries, it was still pleasing to welcome two new exhibitors to the show. Nelson-based Richard Blaikie of No Mow made the trip with his range of ornamental groundcovers (see story on page 30). Richard enjoyed the day, commenting that "when times are tough and you want to create more sales, that's when you need to be at Trade Day."

The other nursery newcomer was 18 year-old landscaper, Thomas van Zijll de Jong of Green Linc, Lincoln, who with his brother has been growing very good landscaping grades in the last two or three years.

Making welcome returns to Christchurch were Appletons' Tree Nurseries of Wakefield and Colorscape Nurseries of Motueka.

In the general opinion of many, Colorscape's massive plant display created by Peter Trewavas and his

Right: New Cornus Greenvale is centred in Pseudowintera Red Leopard from Blue Mountain Nurseries



Right: Dasyliirion longissima features on Leigh's Exotic Plants's stand



Below: John Stanley proved himself a great communicator by attracting big audiences to his three seminars





Above: Nicola Rochester shows Scott's new Osmocote Topdress fertiliser prills which stay in a fallen pot

daughter Arna, was considered the day's best. "It looks as if it were a real planting," said one impressed visitor.

An eye-catching feature was a large photograph superbly highlighting the nursery's well-presented dark-foliaged Cordyline Renegade which is enjoying very good sales.

Speaking of pictures, the biggest photograph was on Harford's stand where a judicious placing of Anne Harford made it seem as if she were standing in the greenhouse itself.

Waimea not only used large pictures to great effect on its stand but its two baskets spilling apples and peaches on to hessian showed

AUTUMN TRADE DAYS



Above: IPPS Seminar speakers, Jeff Elliott and Ian Williams, demonstrate propagation techniques

a deft touch in the skill of making an attractive display.

Of course, Trade Days cannot survive without the suppliers and service sectors, many of whom have been long-standing show stalwarts.

Those who were at last year's show will recall Elliotts Wholesale Plants' dread-inspiring 'pirates'. They may have started a Christchurch trend with their 'dress-ups'. This year it was Graham Saltiel, Scott Bromwich of Daltons and Gary Clark of Pacific-Wide who took on the mantle and were resplendently garbed as, for want of a better term, Daltons elvisii.

Although many fans waited for a burst of Jailhouse Rock or better still, Love me Tender, from the Kings, their wait was in vain, despite the white-suited Graham

Saltiel being observed once or twice strumming an imaginary guitar!

A promise to wear their costumes to the NGIA dinner that night was not kept either!

But back to the products.

Dan Johnson, South Island rep for Takapuna-based Omni Products, enjoyed a good day showing off the range of fashionable gardening gloves including pairs in red and black which could prove popular in Crusader country.

And by the way, did Interworld's Ben Holden decide on the bright red buckets with their black handles as giveaways because of the Canterbury association?

PSP Athco sported Artstone and Mondo, metallic ranges of coloured retail pots and nearby Carann's



Above: Eddie Welsh in full flight in his IPPS seminar

Below left: Shelly Wilson of Plantorama with Cotinus coggria in good colour Below centre: Waimea's Emma Whitcher-Hayton and Kate Marshall with depleted fruit baskets Below right: glove man Dan Johnson of Omni Products -- note Crusader colours!





Above left: Andrew Ketel with Waimea's new dwarf apple, Blush Babe **Above centre:** Anne Harford seems to be standing in a Supermaxi, one of Harford's large greenhouses. **Above right:** Candice Ross-Fraser shows off Blueskin Nursery's new Astelia Alpine Ruby

Kirsty Ogle had information of new Seasonal Planting Gel.

On the Scott's stand, Nicola Rochester demonstrated the new OsmocoteTopdress NT fertiliser prills which sticks to the surface of pot media (see page 47) and Warren Dance of Easy Stow wheeled in his four-wheel farm trailer which could well be utilised in a large nursery or orchard operation.

New to Trade Day, Roy Rose of Niagara Bark Products featured a wide range of bark materials useful both for ornamental purposes and as nursery media.

On the Egmont Commercial

stand Nathan Leggatt showed Ibadex, the new rooting hormone, the replacement for Seradix. And Bruce Underwood of Fiskars highlighted Hozelock products for which they now have the agency.

For those looking for that old, rustic look, Leigh's Marketing displayed a couple of its large 'rusty' pots. And Newfield Marketing had brought along the Supercat range of traps useful for garden, orchard or nursery.

One or two garden centre retailers lamented the dearth of gift line operators but this sector has fallen away, partly because of the economic downturn.

Not everyone makes a killing on Trade Day but they are aware that sometimes it's a matter of 'being there' as Paul Clark would say.

Even so, order books were well in evidence and there were smiles on many faces. Others were pleased to make contacts with potential buyers somewhere down the line and there are also those who simply enjoyed the opportunity to renew acquaintances and friendships.

It's a good way too for oper-

ators to reward staff with a day or two away from the daily tasks in the nursery or store. We certainly noted Headford Propagators' large contingent.

Though the end of day saw one of the fastest takedowns in the event's history, several stayed behind for drinks and nibbles and to talk over the day.

That evening, some 45 people descended on the Speights Alehouse on Bealey Ave for the NGIA-organised Trade Day dinner which is seen as both a networking opportunity and as a good way to wind down. And then it was all over for another year.

Below: Warren Dance with new trailer - 'great for nurseries'



Above: IPPS emblem from the past gets an airing



Left: Landscaper Thomas van Zijl de Jong with some of his nursery plants

