

HORTICENTRE HAPPENINGS

January 2026



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SUMMER PIPFRUIT HARVEST UNDERWAY

It's that exciting time of year again for the Pipfruit sector, when the hard work and dedication put into the crops comes to fruition, and by all accounts this season's crop is looking excellent!



Right: The 2026 Gisborne Tarzi Harvest is underway.

Above: James Torries and, former Horticulture Regional Manager, Joe Lenaghan check out the Wi Pere Tarzi apple crop almost ready for harvest.



Growing Better Crops Together



HORTICENTRE TRUST SPONSORSHIPS

NZ Apples & Pears Expo

The Horticulture Trust are proud to be Silver Sponsors of the 2026 [New Zealand Apples & Pears](#) Expo, to be held 22nd & 23rd July in Queenstown.

Due to the phenomenal success of the expo last year in Nelson, NZAPI is repeating the same format in 2026. The event will run over two full days, and as always, will include a conference dinner and the NZAPI AGM.

Mark it in your diaries and join some of Horticulture's Pipfruit experts in Queenstown for a comprehensive update of the sector.



Horticulture Pipfruit expert Garry Burlace discusses crop performance with Gurpreet Singh of X Fruit.

Mirids in Avocados Research Programme

With support from the Horticulture Trust, this research, conducted by [NZ Avocado](#), is improving understanding of the impact of mirids on avocado fruit set and yield in New Zealand. Monitoring and spray trials conducted across all major avocado-growing regions have confirmed that mirids are widespread and significantly reduce fruit set, contributing to deformed fruit and increased parthenocarpic "cukes." Species identification work has shown that the avocado-damaging mirids belong to one or two species within the genus *Diomocoris*.

The project is now focused on developing integrated pest management (IPM) solutions for growers. This includes optimising natural pyrethrin spray rates to achieve effective control while reducing costs and protecting pollinators and working with a PhD student to investigate mirid biology, reproductive behaviour and alternative host plants. This research will support the development of more effective, sustainable mirid control strategies for the avocado industry.



Horticulture's AgChem Category Manager, Gavin Harris presents the National Final Winner Phoebe Scherer with her award.

Young Grower of the Year

The Horticulture Trust will again return as sponsors of the **Gisborne** and **Nelson** [Young Grower of the Year](#) Competitions along with the other regions already confirmed, contestant clothing will also be provided. Taking place on the 11th and 19th June respectively, these events will test regional contestants with several practical and theoretical challenges, with the winners going on to represent their regions at the National Final later in the year.

It is always exciting to follow the talent emerging from within local operations, and Trust is proud of its long-standing support of the next generation of leaders of this industry.



2025 NZ Tamarillo Field Day, held in Northland.

NZ Tamarillo AGM & Field Day

With the backing of the Hortcentre Trust, the [New Zealand Tamarillo Growers' Association \(NZTGA\)](#), representing 33 growers across the North Island, will hold its annual general meeting and orchard walks in Katikati on 17th February this year. Around half of NZTGA members are based in Northland, with the remainder in the Bay of Plenty. This year's Bay of Plenty location improves accessibility for local growers following several years of meetings held in Northland, with orchard visits planned in Te Puke, Katikati and Whakamarama.

The annual meeting and orchard visits provide an opportunity to share the latest growing knowledge, including research updates on tomato potato psyllid, fertilisers and production practices, alongside market insights and grower networking. Join Hortcentre Advisors at the Field Day for this comprehensive update of the sector.

Hawke's Bay Fruit Growers Association Awards

The Hortcentre Charitable Trust is proud to support the [Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers Association Industry Awards Night 2025](#), to be held on 5 February 2025, celebrating the achievements of Hawke's Bay tertiary students studying horticulture. In partnership with the HBFA Charitable Trust, this sponsorship enables HBFA to award up to 31 scholarships across fruit production and post-harvest study pathways, including Level 3 and 4 qualifications, diplomas and degrees. The funding directly supports students' career development and reflects HBFA's strong commitment to promoting education, skills and future career pathways in fruit growing. The Industry Awards Night continues to be a valued platform for recognising emerging talent and strengthening the future of the Hawke's Bay horticulture industry.



Vegetables Research Roadshow

The Hortcentre Trust are silver sponsors of this year's [Vegetable Research Roadshow](#). Vegetables NZ is hosting a number of workshops across the country that will showcase the latest insights on managing key pests and diseases, smarter nutrient management in vegetable crops, updates from [A Lighter Touch](#) and [Te Ahikawariki](#), and new tools, technologies, and research outcomes relevant to all major vegetable sectors.

Join some of Hortcentre's vegetable specialist Technical Advisors for this great opportunity to catch up on the latest practical research and real-world grower solutions, workshops will be held in the following areas:

- 24 February – Dargaville
- 21 April – Pukekohe
- 22 April – Gisborne
- 23 April – Hawkes Bay
- 12 May - Ashburton
- 13 May - Levin
- 26 May – Ohakune



Hortcentre Technical Manager, Chris Herries will be delivering a short presentation at the Levin workshop. Tickets for all workshops are available [here](#) at no cost.

KNOW YOUR FRIENDS AS WELL AS YOUR ENEMIES: BENEFICIAL INSECTS

Chris Lees, Technical Advisor, Pukekohe



Hoverfly pictured on the leaf of an Iceberg Lettuce in Pukekohe.

There is an increasing interest in the use of biological controls in outdoor crops.

Beneficial insects can be encouraged through the planting of annual flower strips or perennial flowering plants. Beneficials can also be purchased and released at regular intervals.

Even without these interventions, natural predators can already be present within crops at levels that control pest populations within economic thresholds - reducing or eliminating the requirement for insecticide sprays.

Waikato region. In all cases Hoverflies, Ladybirds and Parasitic Wasps were naturally present in the aphid patches.

Adult Hoverfly feed on nectar and pollen, but it is the larval stage that provides the pest control. Larvae can eat around 30 aphid per day by piercing their bodies with hook-like mouth parts and sucking out their body contents.

Ladybird adults and larvae are voracious predators - adults eat 50 aphids per day with larvae consuming over 400 during their development.

Female Parasitoid Wasps lay their eggs inside the aphids. As the aphid is consumed from the inside, it turns into a hardened bronze-coloured mummy. The larvae develops into an adult within this mummy and then cuts a neat circular hole to emerge. An adult wasp can parasitise between 100 and 300 aphids during its lifespan - which lasts 7-14 days.



Aphid Mummies showing emergence hole.

It is important to evaluate the numbers of both pests and beneficials within an aphid outbreak. A decision then needs to be made as to the stage of the battle. Will the beneficials win fast enough to prevent damage exceeding an economic threshold for yield or threatening the marketability of the crop?

If chemical intervention is required, the product choice should be as selective as possible. There are several freely-available side-effects databases that can be consulted. These provide information on the acute and chronic effects of each insecticide active ingredient on the main beneficial insects. Chemical applications could



Aphid Patch in a Melon Crop.



Hoverfly Larvae on a Melon leaf.

also be made to hotspots only, saving costs and allowing beneficials to continue their work in the lower pressure areas.

In addition to the cost reduction and environmental benefits of this approach, reducing the routine use of insecticides slows down the development of insecticide resistance. With the number of active ingredients available to growers reducing each year, it is vitally important to maintain the efficacy of the remaining compounds.

FAREWELL AND WELCOME IN PUKEKOHE

Farewell (for now!) and all the very best to Tanisha Cadwallader, our wonderful Pukekohe Branch Administrator. We wish you well with the arrival of baby number two, how exciting. Enjoy this special time with your growing family and we look forward to welcoming you back next year.

We're very pleased to welcome Geeta Jhamat onboard while Tanisha is on maternity leave. Geeta joined us two weeks ago and introduces herself below:

Hi Guys, I'm Geeta Jhamat I recently joined Horticulture Pukekohe as a Store Administrator. I have a Diploma in Business Administration (MIT). I have four years' administration experience and 10 years' experience owning and managing a fruit and vegetable shop. Outside of work I am married to Navdeep Heer (Market Gardener) together we have one child Livneet Heer, who will be starting his university studies soon. I enjoy working as a helping hand on our family farm in my free time. I am looking forward to learning and growing my skills through Horticulture while serving and supporting the local growers.



Geeta & Tanisha of the Horticulture Pukekohe team.

Enjoy your time at Horticulture, Geeta, and be sure to reach out to the wider team whenever you need assistance.



Horticulture TasmanCrop

Members of HORTICENTRE GROUP

AN UPDATE FROM KIWIFRUIT VINE HEALTH ON THE FRUIT FLY AND HORNET RESPONSE



Response to fruit fly detection continues

The biosecurity response to the detection of a single male Queensland fruit fly in Auckland's Mt Roskill (on 7 January) continues with extra traps in place, fruit testing underway, and great engagement from the community.

No further fruit flies have been found.

Special bins are in place in the controlled area for fruit and vegetable waste disposal. There is one for each household in Zone A and bins are publicly available right across Zone B. There is now also an interactive map showing the location of those Zone B bins, so residents can easily search for their nearest ones.

A specialist team is working in a mobile laboratory in the area, collecting and inspecting fruit for evidence of further flies. They have sliced and examined more than 55kg of fruit, with no indication of an established breeding population.

Signs have been installed at every road entrance and exit to the controlled area, reminding people of the restrictions.

There have been 14 previous incursions of different fruit flies in Auckland and Northland, and all have been successfully eradicated.

KVH is working closely with Biosecurity New Zealand and other horticulture industry groups to minimise risk to New Zealand growers and exporters and ensure all response activities are in the interests of kiwifruit growers. A big shout out to APAC and Punchbowl for assisting in the field during current responses – both this one and the yellow-legged hornet response.

See updates and resources on our dedicated response webpage [here](#).

Homemade traps for yellow-legged hornets

The response to the discovery of queen hornets and nests in the Glenfield and Birkdale areas of Auckland's North Shore continues.

There haven't been any detections outside of the North Shore, and we believe it's unlikely they are present outside this area. However, Biosecurity New Zealand and other industry groups involved in the response – including KVH – are closely monitoring the situation and we encourage people to remain vigilant and report any suspected hornet or nest sightings.

We know many people want to help by setting their own traps. These may be effective in attracting hornets and other flying insects, but significant bycatch of other insects should be expected.

We have created some easy-to-follow instructions for building a simple homemade trap: [How to make a homemade hornet trap – Fact sheet \[PDF, 833 KB\]](#)



The Queensland fruit fly, which is 6-8mm long.



Response field staff inspecting fruit fly traps.

A suggested bait formula to add to your trap is 400g of sugar, 10g of yeast, and 1 litre of water. You can also add 100ml of beer to this mixture. We recommend you change this bait every three weeks.

It is important to closely monitor any homemade trap – check them at least once a week and know what to look for as hornets are larger than common wasps found across New Zealand.

Hornets are larger than common wasps



Tune in to the latest buzz

A **brand-new KVH Snapshot podcast** has dropped, and you won't want to miss it. We sit down with Te Puke beekeeper and orchardist Richard Klaus for an eye-opening chat about the yellow-legged hornet response. We cover why it matters, what's at stake for the kiwifruit industry and others, and how every one of us can play a part in keeping this invasive pest out of our orchards and away from hives.

Richard shares practical, easy steps we can all take to spot anything out of the ordinary, and why staying vigilant is one of the simplest ways to protect the health of our bees and the strength of our sector.

Thank you to the team at [Kiwifruit Vine Health](#) for this update.

GRODAN VISIT WITH AUCKLAND GROWERS

Earlier this month we were very pleased to host Netherlands-based Tico van Leeuwen of [Grodan](#). Tico along with Technical Manager, Jon Harris, visited growers in the West and South Auckland regions.

The Horticulture Group are suppliers of a range of Grodan growing solutions, including their highly regarded rockwool slabs.

Pictured are Tico and Andrew Goad (Regional Manager, West & North Auckland) with Tarsem and Bikram of Nagra Brothers discussing Grodan rockwool slab hydration techniques.

Also, shown is a Merlice crop being successfully grown on Grodan rockwool slab.



HORTICENTRE EXCLUSIVE PRODUCT FEATURE

Basfoliar® Kelp SL

Basfoliar® Kelp SL is a liquid biostimulant based on 100% sustainably sourced seaweed *Eklonia maxima*. It stimulates root growth. Basfoliar® Kelp SL is suitable for both foliar and fertigation applications.

A unique production process

Unlike most other seaweed products, Basfoliar®Kelp SL is obtained by cold micronization process which preserves the integrity of photoactive substances. It is then standardized to ensure every batch is consistent.

An efficient root stimulant which benefits the whole plant

Basfoliar® Kelp SL induce the growth of pre-existing roots and the formation of new adventitious roots. Optimal rooting leads to better early crop establishment, improved overall plant health, crop quality & yield. Basfoliar® Kelp SL also assist in flower initiation, development and growth of fruits and induce sugar and mineral accumulation at the site of application.

A unique liquid biostimulant based on 100% naturally extracted seaweed.

Basfoliar®Kelp SL

Macronutrients

Nitrogen (N)	0.2 %
Phosphorus (P)	0.4 %
Potassium (K)	1.0 %

Micronutrients (g/kg)

Calcium (Ca)	50
Iron (Fe)	0.61
Manganese (Mn)	0.01
Zinc (Zn)	0.56
Copper (Cu)	0.17
Boron (B)	0.25
Molybdenum (Mo)	0.11

Alginate acid	1.0 %
Amino acids	0.25 %

Vitamins

10L Pails

Crop	Rate (L/ha)	Foliar application stages			
Apples / pear	3 - 4	Pre bloom / pink bud	Flowering*	Early fruit formation*	Every 21 days until harvest
Avocado	3 - 4	Early spring growth	Pre-bloom*	Young fruitlets*	Summer
Citrus	3 - 4	Early bloom	Petal fall	With summer sprays	With autumn sprays
Kiwifruit	2.5 - 3	Pre bloom	100% petal fall*	Early fruit formation*	14 day intervals
Grapes	2	At 20-30 cm cane	At 45-60 cm cane	Full bloom*	Berry set early shattering
Stone fruit	3 - 4	Pink or white bud	Petal fall*	10 days later	
Strawberries	2 - 3	Prior to transplant	At first pre bloom*	At first fruit set	Every 3-4 weeks to mid harvest

*Add Basfoliar® Kelp SL 200ml / 100L with Calcium foliar sprays or foliar fertilisers, (e.g. Basfoliar) or micronutrient (e.g. Fetrilon Combi).

Foliar application rates per 100 litres.

Crop	Rate (L/ha)	Foliar application stages			
Onion	1.5 - 2	Soak seedling@ 1L/100L	14 days after transplanting	2 weeks later	14 – 21 day intervals
Potato	2 - 3	Soak seedling@ 1L/100L	After emergence	2 weeks later	Every 2 – 4 weeks
Protected Crops	1 - 2	Soak seedling@ 1L/100L	14 days after transplanting*	2 weeks later	2 weekly during plant growth & fruit formation
Turf	2	Start foliar applications at initial growth stage and continue at 3-4 week intervals. Make additional applications after periods of stress or heavy use to newly applied sod, and as late season spray to help improve resistance to winter kill and frost damage.			

Crop	Rate (ml/ha)	Foliar application stages
Ornamental plants, vegetables, fruit crops (young crops and early season)	200-250	High volume sprays
	max. 1000	Low volume sprays (= maximum 1 %)



Soil Applications

Drench seedling trays, pots or beds at 1L per 100L water.

Apply in a thorough drench to fully wet containers and beds.

Apply to soil at 1 to 5 L per hectare.

Broadcast or strip application along the planted rows using a high-volume T-jet or flood jet nozzle.

Use 1-2L / ha for multiple applications at 14-to-21-day intervals.

Use 4-5L / ha for single applications.

Fertigation: apply 1-2 L / ha per week.

Compatibility

Basfoliar® Kelp SL is compatible with many foliar fertilisers and crop protection products. Do not tank mix Basfoliar® Kelp SL with products that have marginal safety on a crop e.g. copper products on some crops, spraying oils on some crops.

HORTICENTRE STAFF PROFILE OF THE MONTH

Congratulations on 20 years' service with Horticulture Group, Natalie Budd.

Meet the Team: Natalie Budd —Store Manager, Bay of Plenty

How long have you been with Horticulture?

20 years, I started with Horticulture in January 2006.

What crops are you passionate about?

All crops interest me, and with the team I work with, they teach me different things every day.

What inspired you to join the horticulture industry?

My parents grew avocados, tamarillos, calla lilies and herbs on a property in Katikati. They supplied herbs to restaurants and cafes.

I also have a love for plants and enjoy the outdoors as it offers work-life balance and is good for mental well-being.

What do you like most about your work?

Meeting and talking to people with their knowledge and experience of the industry. I learn a new thing every day.

Also, dealing with growers over the phone and counter as I get to know them and their families.

It is always very rewarding when customers acknowledge and appreciate you for the help you have given them.

What's a common challenge in your role, and how do you handle it?

There's a different challenge every day, from a customer enquiry to organising a delivery to a customer on time. I just get on with the job or ask the team for help. There's never been a challenge that we can't find a solution for.

What do you enjoy doing outside work?

Outside of work on the weekends there's nothing like a walk around Mount Maunganui, followed by a Copenhagen cone ice cream.

I also love swims at the beach, bike riding at the Redwoods and of course gardening.

If you weren't in Horticulture, what would you be doing?

My Father always wanted me to breed buffalo on their farm and go into cheese making with their milk (mozzarella). My father and I were in a breeding programme, breeding highland cattle and rare breeds for clients.

What's a fun fact people might not know about you?

My son lives in Finland, we video call regularly, but I look forward to visiting him there one day.



Natalie Budd, at home in the Horticulture Bay of Plenty Store, has recently notched up 20 years' service with Horticulture.

Thanks, Natalie — and a massive congratulations on hitting your 20-year milestone this month! It's an incredible achievement and we thank you for your hard work, dedication and ongoing service to the Horticulture Group.

HORTICENTRE HEALTH & SAFETY FOCUS POINT



Forklift Safety

Forklifts are essential to daily operations but can pose serious risks if not managed correctly. Clear procedures, good communication and regular monitoring are key to preventing incidents. It is critical that we reflect on these regularly.

Only **company-authorised and trained operators** may operate forklifts.

Forklifts must be **removed from service immediately** if a fault develops or if they are unsafe. Report faults and do not use them until repairs are completed.

Operators must **sound horns when entering or exiting warehouse areas**. Sites should use **warning systems** (buzzers, flashing lights or sensors) where practical.

Staff must **keep clear of forklifts and loads at all times**, especially behind forklifts. Anyone assisting must maintain **clear visual contact** with the operator.

When loading trucks or containers, place **two orange safety cones** at either end of the vehicle, positioned **three metres from the non-loading side**, to warn approaching vehicles.

High-visibility vests are mandatory for forklift operators and anyone entering warehouse areas.

Limit the use of **LPG or diesel forklifts in poorly ventilated spaces** and allow time for **air circulation** when working in sea containers.

Truck drivers must be positioned **out of harm's way**, visible to the forklift operator at all times.

Forklifts must display **unauthorised use warning signage**, be fitted with **clean windows**, and have temporary weather covers removed when used indoors.



Paul Atkinson moves a load of fertiliser in our Richmond store.



Growing Better Crops Together

Horticulture TasmanCrop

Members of HORTICENTRE GROUP