

## Finding her calling in the kiwifruit industry

Meet Kristine Savage, the manager of Rauotehuia Orchard in Edgecumbe, and a perfect example of the exciting opportunities that can be found in New Zealand's kiwifruit industry.

Kristine's journey in the industry began over two decades ago, when she found herself at a crossroads. She had been pursuing a career in teaching, but pregnancy caused her to re-evaluate her plans. Rather than feeling frustrated, she saw it as an opportunity to try something new. She decided to join the kiwifruit industry as a labourer and never looked back.

*"Everything about it is totally enjoyable,"* says Kristine, who speaks fondly of her role. *"Even if you work on the same orchard, there's always something new and different."* Her job as manager of Rauotehuia Orchard, under Māori Investments Limited, is a perfect example of this.



*"No one job is ever the same, regardless if you're thinning, winter pruning, summer pruning, every day is a different challenge,"* she says.

Her attitude and enthusiasm for the work is undeniable. *"I totally enjoyed being outside, and totally enjoyed being with a different range of people from all around the world,"* she says. *"The days have so much variety, even if you work on the same orchard, there's always something new and different."*

Kristine also values the sense of community and connection she feels at the orchard, and she especially appreciates the role of Māori Investments in the industry.

*"I definitely love the people I work for, definitely appreciate Māori Investments,"* she says. *"My crew, I suppose the Rauotehuia crew, really love working with the whānau back there."*

She also values the connections she's made with other industry professionals, whether through her work with contractors, or at field days and networking events.

*"That's a huge part of what makes the job interesting for me and more rewarding,"* she says.

Beyond the day-to-day work on the orchard, Kristine relishes the opportunities to network and learn from others in the industry.

*"There's not one day you won't learn something in kiwifruit, whether you're a manager, whether you've been a manager for 20 odd years, you will always learn something new in the industry,"* she says.

Though her journey in the kiwifruit industry may not have been the path she initially envisioned, it has become an incredibly fulfilling and rewarding journey. So, if you're looking for a career that will keep you on your toes, with the opportunity to work with a variety of people and learn something new every day, the kiwifruit industry might just be for you. Just like Kristine Savage, you may find your calling in the orchards of New Zealand.