

## **A Knock on the Door Becomes a 20 Year Journey**

Helen Scott, an experienced orchard manager, has been in the kiwifruit industry for 20 years.

She began her journey in horticulture in New Zealand when her neighbour knocked on her door one day, asking if she wanted to go picking. Without hesitation, she put her kids in the van for Kōhunga and headed for the orchards.

*"I fell in love with the industry right away," said Helen. "Every day is different on the orchard, and I guess that's why I like it. It's not mundane, and I'm not stuck in a room looking at a screen. Something comes up all the time, and every season is different."*



Helen is currently the orchard manager for MIL (Māori Investments Limited), a company that specializes in the cultivation of kiwifruit and other fruits. One of the company's main principles is to "grow our own" from the communities, which aligns with Helen's mission to give back to the community.

*"I was lucky to get asked to manage for MIL, because I could give something back to the community," said Helen. "Given that opportunity was pretty cool."*

One thing that Helen says many people may not know about kiwifruit, is that there are many career pathways in the industry. *"It's not just picking fruit, there's so much more that goes into it,"* she says.

After twenty years in the industry, she's seen it all, and she's happy to say that there's so much flexibility in the job nowadays, like 'mummy hours.' Staff hours are tailored to various needs and lifestyles, and those are being respected more and more. Helen shares that it's not a set routine for everyone, everyone is different and therefore they work with people to make sure it's the best fit for both parties.

Helen also enjoys helping other people navigate their careers at MIL and giving back where she can. *"Horticulture's not for everyone, but if it is for someone, I'd like to be part of their journey,"* she said.