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JONO SUTTON



# THE GRASS IS GREENER

## 2019 YOUNG GROWER OF THE YEAR

writer **PETER WHITE**

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**JONO SUTTON** sees a bright future ahead for school leavers who decide on horticulture as a career. The 26-year-old from Nelson is well-placed to comment on the positive state-of-play in the horticulture industry after he was named the 2019 Young Grower of the Year in early October.

Jono won the award up against six other regional champions from around New Zealand.

“This is one of horticulture’s highest achievements for a young person – winning it is massive,” says Jono. “Some of the past winners have gone on to do amazing things in horticulture, so to have my name next to theirs is overwhelming.”

“I work for the family business so I am not looking for a new job and am pretty happy with how things are going. But this definitely does lift your profile in the industry as a young, emerging grower.”

HortNZ Chief Executive Mike Chapman says the Young Grower of the Year is important because it highlights horticulture as a vibrant career in a \$6 billion industry.

“Our industry is responding to new requirements, particularly in the areas of freshwater, land use, food safety, and health and safety.”

“These areas offer young people many and varied career opportunities. I am positive that all entrants in 2019’s Young Grower competition have benefited from the experience and will continue to grow and support horticulture.”

Jono’s job on his family’s apple and boysenberry orchard changes with the seasons, which is one of the things that gives him so much work enjoyment.

“I have a management role on the orchard, which involves staff supervision, weekly planning, agrichemical application, machinery operation and repair and maintenance.

“I do truck driving and all sorts of stuff. I love being outdoors and I love how horticulture has a wide range of skill-sets required. As it is an annual crop you are doing different jobs throughout the year from various winter things to spring spraying, and over summer we are harvesting.”

Jono attended Garin College in Richmond, Nelson. In Year 12 he took Biology, Outdoor Education, Materials Technology, English, Economics and Maths.

He says students who like to be outdoors and do not want to be stuck in an office job would be best suited to a career like his in horticulture.

“I was never very academic at school and I found horticulture did not necessarily require big academics to get into it. But it is important to get some qualifications.

“I did a Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) studying through Primary ITO while I worked and I would really recommend it. The industry is really looking for some new young people to get involved.”



### KEY FACTS



- **JONO SUTTON** WORKS IN A MANAGEMENT ROLE ON HIS FAMILY’S APPLE AND BOYSENBERRY ORCHARD. THIS ROLE INCLUDES A HUGE VARIETY OF TASKS, FROM TRUCK DRIVING TO AGRICHEMICAL APPLICATION.
- HE HAS A **CERTIFICATE IN HORTICULTURE (LEVEL 3)** THROUGH **PRIMARY ITO**.
- **JONO** WON THE **2019 YOUNG GROWER OF THE YEAR**, WHERE HE WAS UP AGAINST SIX OTHER REGIONAL CHAMPIONS FROM AROUND NEW ZEALAND.



For more information on careers in horticulture and the Young Grower of the Year competition, visit [www.hortnz.co.nz](http://www.hortnz.co.nz)