

40  
years  
1968 - 2008

## From past...



Born 3 June 1934, Eric Appleton grew up and was educated in Middlesbrough, England. Two years of practical forestry work and two years National Service in Germany were followed by two years at Lynford Hall Forester Training School in Thetford, Norfolk where he gained first place and a gold medal and decided to emigrate to New Zealand. A 197cc James motorcycle was his chosen form of transport, fitted with aluminium panniers supporting an expandable suitcase. All the necessary documents were obtained and he set off on his epic journey on 10 September 1956. He travelled across Europe and Asia by road, then to Penang by cargo ship, by road again through Malaysia to Singapore and on to Fremantle, Australia on a passenger ship. A final boat trip across the Tasman Sea saw Eric arrive in Auckland on 18 February 1957, having covered 15,600 miles by road, and looking forward to a new life in his chosen country, New Zealand.

Work for the Forest Service at Woodhill was followed by three years with F.R.I., mostly in the South Island establishing provenance trials and selecting *Pinus radiata*. In 1960 Eric married May Manera and they settled in Wakefield, where Eric worked for H. Baigent & Sons Ltd., a private forestry and sawmilling company. Tree selection, fertiliser trials, keeping forest records and expanding the forest nursery kept Eric busy whilst May was busy raising their two sons, Robert and Gordon. Eric laid out the first boron trials in *Pinus radiata* at the suggestion of Eric Chittenden, a Cawthron Institute researcher. This pioneer work led to the widespread use of boron in forestry today.

In May 1968 May and Eric leased three acres of land and established Appletons Tree Production Nursery, principally growing forestry seedlings and a range of hardy ornamental trees. In an era of expanding forest plantings, the nursery developed through hard work and attention to quality. In 1973, a further 20 acres were purchased in the Wai-iti Valley south of Wakefield, on the site of the former Cawthron Institute Research Farm.



The range of species grown had diversified with experience and this provided a backstop when *Pinus radiata* plantings temporarily declined in the 1980s.

The early 1990s were a period of rapid expansion in forestry planting, with production peaking at 6.5 million forestry seedlings. Extensive ornamental plantings around the Wai-iti nursery proved the







*...to present*

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value of seed trees, and in 1993 75 hectares of hill country east of Wakefield were purchased to establish a seed orchard, arboretum and forestry trial area.

Additional land was added in 2000, and to date 6500 ornamental trees covering 1000 species have been planted and seedlings grown from the seeds collected.

Valuable knowledge has been gained from the tree species and provenance and the practical experience of weed control, tree shelters and form pruning.

The Mt Heslington nursery site was purchased in 1999 to secure an adequate growing area for implementing rye grass rotations between crops of forest seedlings and future expansion.

Robert gained his Dip.Hort. at Lincoln and, following nursery work in Canada and Switzerland, returned to the family business, becoming a partner after the tragic death of May in 1983. In 1985 Robert married Linda, who is responsible for managing the company's finances. They have two children: James, who attends Nelson College, and Hannah, who is studying at Massey University.



Eric married Eileen in 1987 and they have visited forests in South America, Japan and Britain. Eileen, a professional actor, has specialised in monologues by Alan Bennett, touring New Zealand extensively.

*For over 40 years we've been part of the landscape, delivering plants and trees of consistent quality every time.*



*Appletons in Wai-iti*



*Mt Heslington*



*Appletons staff – A team (Absent: Rosie and Morten)*



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## Our people



*Reiko, Claire & Vicki*



*Anita, Maree & Amber*



*Sara, Lou & Maureen*



*Christine & Lou*



*Ian & Jackie Williams*

Still a family operation, the Appletons Tree Nursery family has a huge depth of knowledge and skills amongst its staff.

We consider our staff to be one of our most important assets. We encourage them to become well rounded in the horticultural field and improve their opportunities for advancement.

An additional 35 seasonal workers complement a dedicated and enthusiastic team of 19 permanent full time staff over the busy winter lifting period.

Long term service of 20 or more years is not unusual, and we also have an active apprentice-training programme, and overseas exchanges most winters.

Our team is trained and ready to meet your tree stock requirements.



*Bevan, Morten, Bill & Ed*

*We've been in the business of growing quality plants for 40 years.  
We believe our people and the service they offer are one of the  
best reasons to buy from Appletons Tree Nursery.*





## What's growing on...

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The tree catalogue and reference guide in the year 2000 was a major improvement on our typed stocklist. Customer feedback has been most enthusiastic and encouraging, with one customer emailing us at 1.30 in the morning, having read it from cover to cover. The photography is shot almost entirely in-house, and the catalogue format is designed in collaboration with Dagmar from Montage Design.

Our website by John Liddle is being improved as a natural extension of the reference guide, offering additional search features and past feature articles, as well as links to additional information.



Robert & Eric Appleton

*Though much has changed in the nursery industry over the years, Eric's founding principles remain the same:*

- *To raise the best quality trees possible and sell them at a fair price*
- *Willingness to try new ideas, listen to our customers and respond to their needs - the heart of Appletons' success*



## Thank you

*To our many loyal customers who have grown with us over the past 40 years and to new customers, a big thank you. We look forward to working with each of you as we share our love of trees into the next 40 years.*