# GRAHAM HUTCHINS – COUNTY PARK NURSERIES

Born 1930, I enjoyed helping my father to grow vegetables on his allotment when aged 11.  I left school aged 14 and worked on several arable farms and in glasshouses growing tomatoes and cucumbers, e.g. and soft fruits.  I was called up for National Service in the Army aged 18. After initial training I was given the job of caring for the Colonel's pigs, I volunteered to grow Veg. for the regiment on 4 acres of land and I was given two tractors and plenty of tools, I could ask for as many men as I needed, I had a fair sized greenhouse with several cold frames.  Here I had great success growing tomatoes, cucumbers and all sorts of vegetables.

After National Service I worked for a short while on a mixed local nursery then for another year with a landscaping firm before becoming a freelance gardener and landscaper.

I married in 1955 and brought a bungalow near Romford with ½ acre of old apple orchards, cleaned trees, bought a second hand greenhouse to grow Cacti and succulents, bedding plants in season and grew Alpines in frames.  I brought in trees and shrubs, opening Thursdays and Saturdays only, selecting and crossing many plants especially Hebes but also Hostas, Geraniums and Primulas.  Working with Hebes naturally lead me to my first visit to New Zealand in 1977 armed with my collecting permits.  It was very rewarding collecting seeds and plants and meeting many N.Z. plants people.  That year I won my first RHS Gold Medal at Chelsea Show.  At my nursery I crossed several N.Z.Clematis Sp. Podocarpus species and Hebes. Three more visits to Australia, Tasmania and N.Z. followed in 1981, 1985, 1990, I collected over 1000 plants new to the UK. Showing at the RHS, I won a total of 26 Gold Medals and many silver gilts too.  Since then I have raised many new plants crossing Podocarpus, Sp. Clematis, Corokia, Olearia, Coprosma, Notospartium, Pittosporum, Callistemon and many others selecting about 30 good new plants each year.  My aim has been to select better types for the UK climate and those that I liked too!



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