

NEW ZEALAND PLANT PROTECTION MEDAL



This medal is awarded by the New Zealand Plant Protection Society to honour those who have made exceptional contributions to plant protection in New Zealand in the widest sense. The medal is awarded for outstanding services to plant protection, whether through research, education, implementation or leadership.

In 2012 the New Zealand Plant Protection Medal was awarded to Margaret Dick. Margaret has devoted a lifetime of professional and personal service to protecting New Zealand's forests. She joined the Forest Research Institute (now trading as 'Scion') at Rotorua in 1972, as one of only five forest pathologists in the country. Margaret specialised in the diagnosis of disorders of forest trees, and has been in charge of the diagnostic service for over 20 years. She has made a particular study of fungal pathogens of eucalypts and was the first to describe two

new *Phytophthora* species that were unusual in living high up in the crowns of eucalypts. Margaret is a member of the Kauri Dieback Joint Agency Response Technical Advisory Group that is responding to the disease of kauri associated with *Phytophthora* taxon *Agathis*. Over her career she has been in charge of research on several serious canker and needle diseases of *Pinus radiata*, and is recognised by her colleagues and the wider industry as the "go to person" when there are queries on tree diseases.

Margaret's research has contributed many benefits to the forest industry, and one outstanding example is her work to protect lupins from lupin blight in the 1980s. Lupins are an important species in coastal sand forests where nitrogen fixing plants are vital to a healthy tree crop. Margaret has been instrumental in helping nursery and forest managers to mitigate the costs and risks associated with major forest diseases. She also contributed to the protection of urban and native trees through her work on technical advisory groups for diseases such as Dutch elm disease and kauri dieback.

New Zealand's border protection efforts frequently required Margaret's input. She was involved in the detection of *Fusarium circinatum* in quarantine material in 2003, which prevented the introduction of this unwanted organism into New Zealand. For two decades Margaret represented New Zealand on a trans-Tasman Research Working group on forest pathology, where threats to both countries and common challenges to forest health were discussed. Margaret was an active researcher in the Better Border Biosecurity (B3) programme, and the impact of her research over the last 40 years has arguably saved the forest industry and New Zealand millions of dollars through preventing these unwanted organisms from entering the country.

Like all great scientists Margaret develops others, imparting her passion for research and quest for increasing knowledge and understanding in her field of plant pathology. She is a role model and an inspiration to female scientists, and has overseen and guided the research of numerous younger pathologists, both nationally and internationally.

Margaret's contribution to plant protection extends beyond her professional involvement. She is an active member of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, and is the contact person for the Rotorua Branch. She has had a major involvement in the Tikitapu Pest Control Programme aimed at native forest protection through control of rats and possums.