

The time for change is now

Monbulk Rural becomes Hortitech and Horticraft

By Matt Ross



There comes a time when a business must decide whether they will stick or twist. For Monbulk Rural that time is now and they're choosing to twist. Established in 1982, they've been servicing the nursery and flower industries, providing crop protection solutions to almost every area of horticulture and agriculture. We caught up with Accounts and Manufacturing Coordinator, Dean Smith and Marketing Coordinator Ashley O'Hara to find out more about the changes they're undertaking.

With increasing demand for their products from New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, and most recently the Northern Territory, Monbulk Rural, a name that is tied to its Victorian location, will be phased out and replaced by Hortitech. Their motto, grow with us, seems even more fitting as they look to build on what they've achieved in Victoria.

"It's sad to see the name go, I've been here a number of years and it will be strange to not be Monbulk Rural. But I completely appreciate that as we grow and supply to more of Australia it makes sense to move away from that localised feel," said Dean.

They'll still be delivering the same high-quality product and supporting their customers with outstanding service. For decades customers have enjoyed visiting their site in Monbulk, talking to Stan, their manufacturing foreman or Richard, their yard hand, about their needs. And that personal touch will not be compromised, it's part of their DNA.

They're also launching a sister company, Horticraft, which will take on the wholesale side of the business; supplying bulk

greenhouse plastic, weed matting, bird netting, new build shade structures, and the like. They've established a warehouse in Gatton, QLD, and are looking for a suitable premises in Tasmania, to house wholesale products that they can quickly distribute to interstate customers.

And now they want to get the word out; to share their new identity and start telling their story. They've created a new website (hortitech.net.au) that allows customers to place their own orders for increased efficiency and Ashley has started applying her creativity and energy to their social media channels to share the skill and workmanship that goes into their design and manufacturing.

And Dean's quick to point out it's already being reflected through their sales. "We shared photos of Stan manufacturing our benches on Instagram and received so many comments from customers who had no idea that we manufacture everything right here, from the benches and potting trolleys to the tunnel house kits. That really blew me away and made me see the value of creating and sharing more content to tell our story."



And for every innovation and step forward they take they are careful to retain things that still work.

They've expanded their team to bring in a civil engineer for the first time, but they still use the same 70-year-old rolling machine.

The orange branding stays, but the shade will have a refresh.

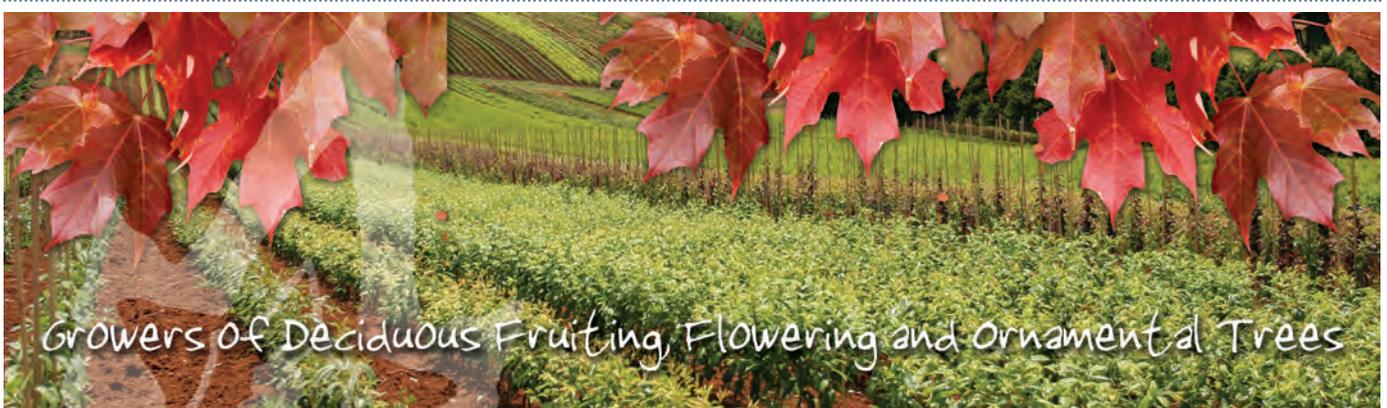
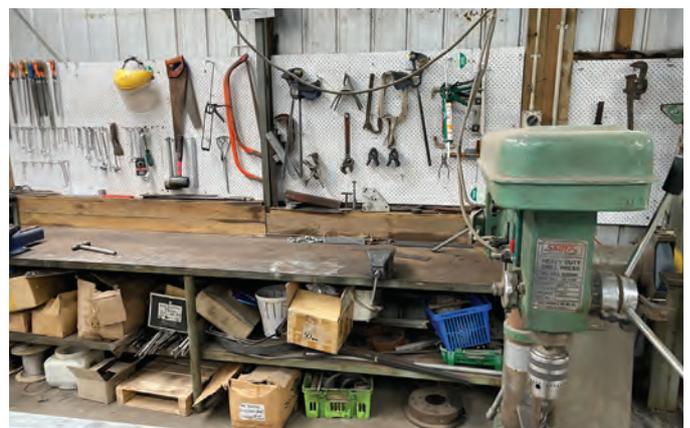
The recruitment of younger team members is balanced with the retention of those that have been part of the team for decades and carry so much knowledge, indeed original owner Dave Arnott, now 76, chooses to work three days a week and enjoys sharing what he knows. Stan has been part of the team for 25 years, Richard 12 and Heather 11.

And why would they want to leave, together they've cultivated a special workplace culture. This is a united team who learn from and inspire one another. They all know their roles and owner James trusts they will execute them. This is not a place for micromanagement or hierarchical structures; they respect each other's talents and enjoy one another's company too much.

As I left the Hortitech offices I could feel the excitement and the passion they have for where they're heading. Change isn't always easy but sometimes it's necessary and NGIV is looking forward to seeing Hortitech and Horticraft expand their business throughout Australia.

"The launch of Hortitech and Horticraft, and the new website, represents the biggest changes in our 39-year history. But it's the right time. It's big for us, it's big for our customers and we'll all go through it together," said Dean.

Follow them on Instagram (@monbulkrural.hortitech) and Facebook (@Hortitech-Monbulk-Rural-Enterprises) to learn more about the team, their work and their growth. 🌱



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