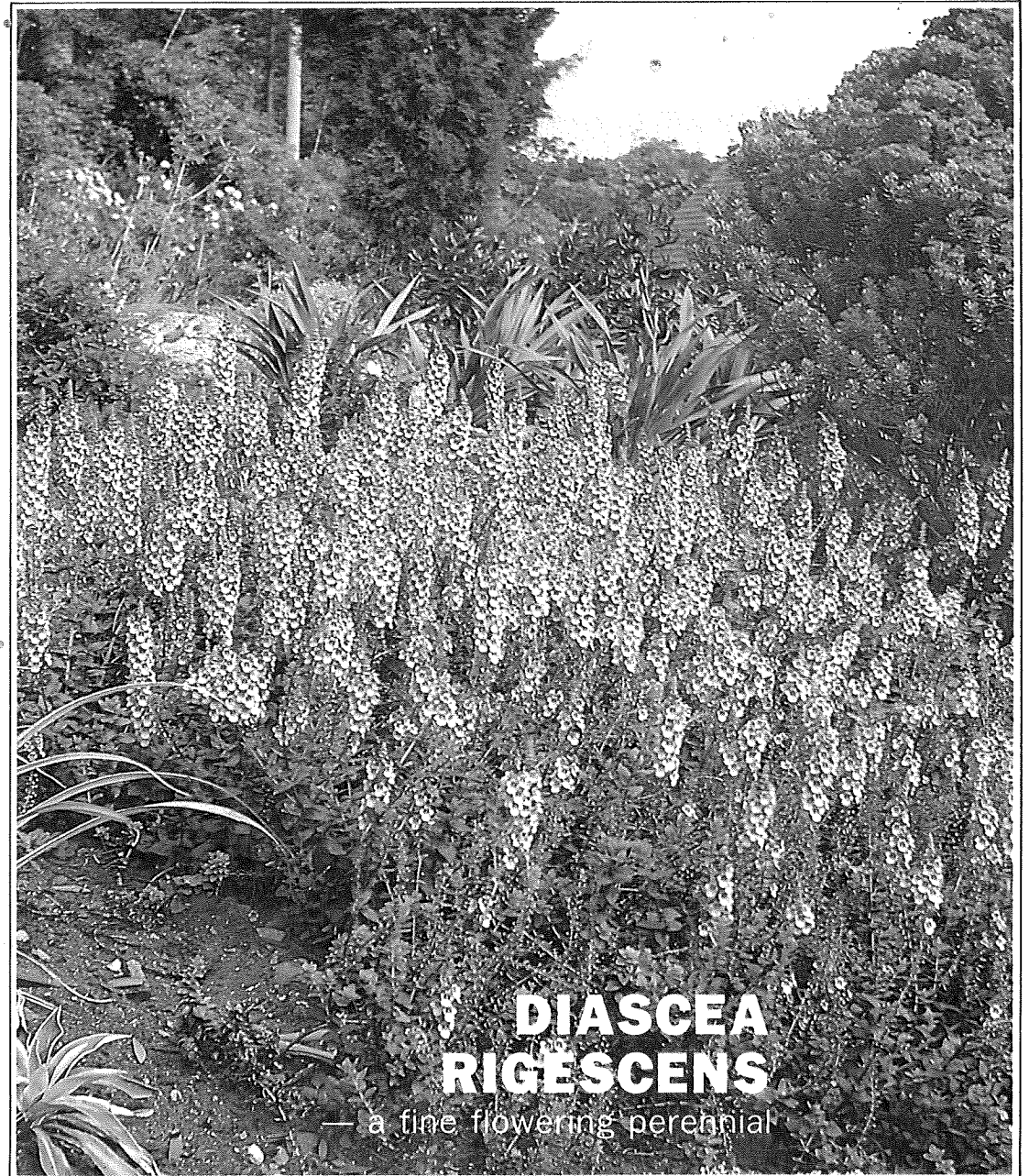


# COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE

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**DIASCEA  
RIGESCENS**

— a fine flowering perennial

Right: Terry and Pam Hatch amidst their Pukekohe nursery.  
Below: Daughter, Deborah Van der Berg, may take over the nursery with her brother in a few years

# People Need Plants — and Plants Need People

*Nurseryman and conservationist, Terry Hatch, believes in conservation by cultivation — a philosophy which has helped him turn 5 acres of Pukekohe farmland into one of New Zealand's more important nurseries . . .*

THE BIGGEST BREEDER of perennial plants in New Zealand, and one of the country's leading nerine and zantedeschia producers, has opened his nursery doors to the public for the first time this year.

Terry Hatch with his wife Pam established a nursery in Pukekohe 13 years ago on five acres.

"Perennials were a line no-one else was doing — I don't like copying others and prefer doing my own thing.

"When we started out, there was very little market for them but now that market is much greater."

Mr Hatch believes people's gardening tastes are changing as section sizes decrease.

"Perennials are great for picking and they've always had their place in England and Europe.

"The lifestyle in New Zealand is changing — partly because of the petrol crisis people aren't going out

as much as they were and they're gardening in a slightly different way.

"With education there are a lot more people who are plant conscious and who realize there's more than one variety of a plant."

A founding member of the New Zealand chapter of the International Plant Propagators Society, Mr Hatch describes himself as an enthusiast, even a plant fanatic.

"Collectors or enthusiasts like myself bring plants in and grow them for a while and then release them to the public who start wanting to buy and collect them too."

When the Hatch's first arrived in New Zealand from England 19 years ago, Terry worked for John Pettit



for two and a half years before starting out on his own as a landscape gardener, supplementing his income with a backyard nursery in Manurewa selling fuschias and rock plants to local shops.

"I've grown plants all my life — I even had a nursery in England by the time I was 15," says Mr Hatch.

The move to Pukekohe was more than just a way of starting a larger nursery — it was the realization of a chosen lifestyle based on active Christian philosophy, still an important part of their lives today.

From a one-bed-of-plants beginning with \$20 in the kitty, Joy Plants (named after Pam's middle name) today turns out more than 100,000 plants annually.

At one stage the nursery supplied clients from Whakatane to Kaitaia, tak-

ing on five or six staff to cope with hectic schedules.

But health forced Mr Hatch to consolidate the nursery into a family run business with a less frantic pace.

Now he supplies about six main wholesale clients, mostly nurseries and landscape gardeners who are prepared to pick up the plants themselves.

But until this year the operation has been strictly wholesale.

The decision to extend into retail came, says Mr Hatch, because many large commercial customers were slow to pay their bills.

Four or five years ago the Hatch's diversified into exporting to England and Germany.

Today their export markets also include America, Japan, Australia and Africa — mainly seeds, bulbs and

some cut flowers.

While plant sales provide an income, Mr Hatch's true interests are plant breeding, hybridization and conservation.

Although Joy Plants specializes in perennials including ground covers and rock plants and has stocks of some 1500 varieties, Mr

Hatch is also one of New Zealand's major breeders of nerines and zantedeschias.

Two years ago he exported 5000 zantedeschia to Holland and last year he planted out 60,000 bulbs.

To further the flower export venture, he last year took in a partner, Malcolm Garner — establishing



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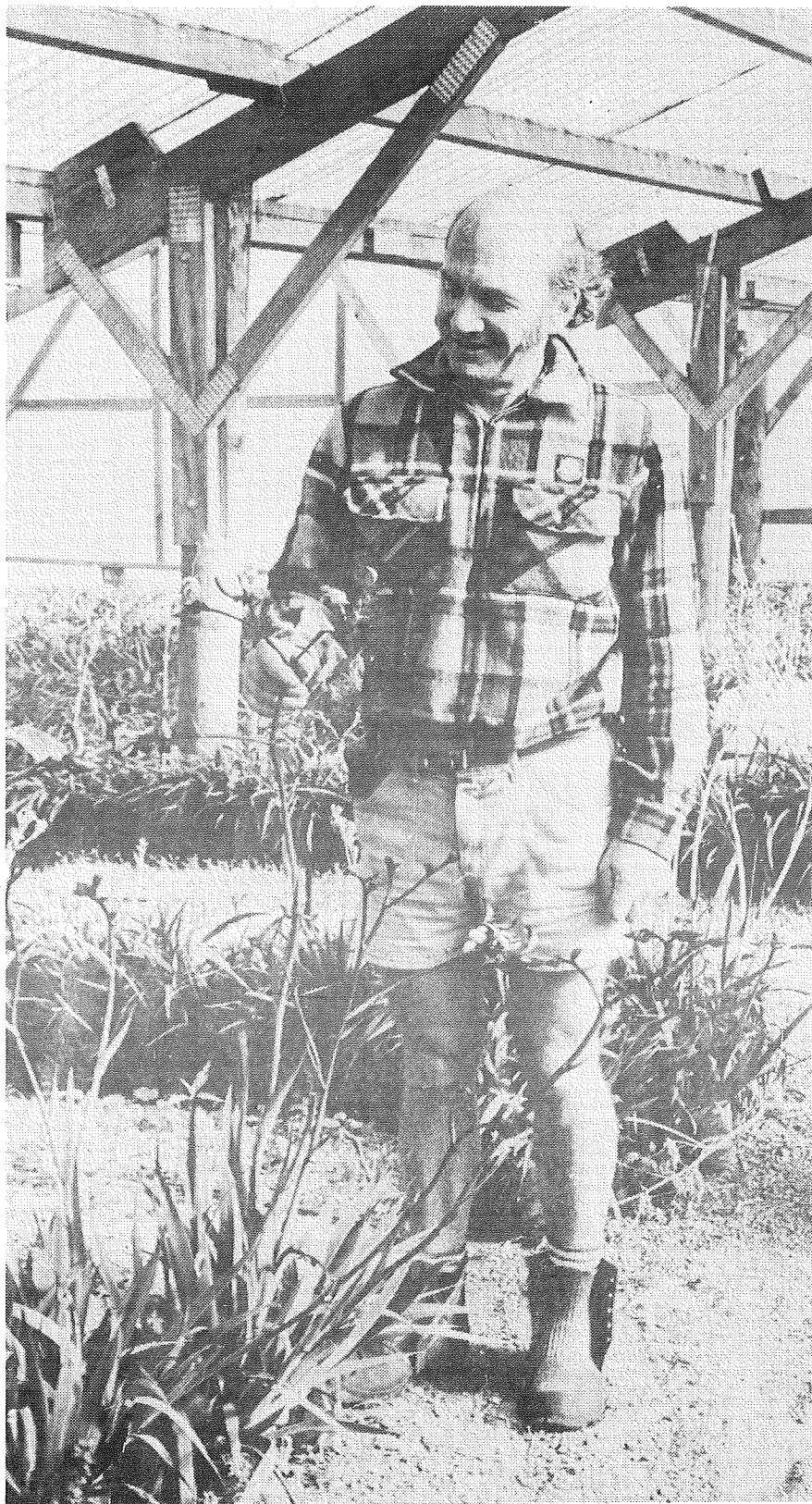
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Terry Hatch with one of his rarities, *macropedia fulginosa*, or black kangaroo paw, from north western Australia.

another three acres in Pukekohe solely for cut flower production.

During the past three years he has built four glass-houses mainly for nerine breeding, giving him nearly 600 sq metres under cover.

"I'll have about 30,000 new hybrids coming into production over the next two years and then another 10,000 new varieties every year after to choose from."

As a conservation measure the Hatch's also produce rare native plants particularly small perennials and creepers such as gunnera, hamiltonii, mazus and pumilo.

Mr Hatch's catchphrase is conservation by cultivation.

"They say people need plants but plants need people as well," he says.

"I'm very sad when plant varieties get lost because of man's activities."

In the conservation of natives he works in closely with fellow nurseryman Graham Platt.

He is also involved in seed exchange with contacts around the world and has in the past sent seeds to the Kew garden seed banks.

He usually writes once a week to one of his 40 or 50 fellow breeders around the world.

The most difficult part of plant breeding, he says, is getting the initial plant stock.

"The only way to get good rare plants is to trade — money isn't important."

In Winter Mr Hatch likes to donate two months of his time to the Wildlife Service as a volunteer, transferring birds on the Hauraki Gulf islands; eradicating goats on outer islands or tree planting.

He hopes to hand over the nursery side of his business to his son and daughter in five years time, leaving him to extend his hybridization work and cut flower exports.

Mr Hatch also hopes to have time to extend his conservation work by gathering and breeding more endangered species as well as working more closely with the Wildlife Service and acclimatization societies.