



## RHS Wisley Student wins 2008 Young Horticulturist of the Year National Final.

Patrick Wiltshire is third time lucky. After three years of trying, Patrick Wiltshire, currently studying at RHS Wisley, but originally from East Yorkshire, has won the 2008 National Final of the Young Horticulturist of the Year (YHoY) competition and hopes to use his £2000 travel bursary, sponsored by the Percy Thrower Trust, to travel in the USA to study native and cultivated plants. Patrick's success was more assured as each of the eleven rounds went past and he cranked up his impressive score. It was only in the last rapid fire buzzer round that Ed Miles, from the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh, was able to eat away a little at his impressive 10 point lead.

Patrick's prizes, apart from his Percy Thrower Trust £2000 travel bursary, include Life Membership of The Eden Project, a Wollemi Pine, two tickets to one of any of the 2008 summer Eden Session concerts and a signed Angela Easterling print. Ed Miles received £700 from the Horticultural Development Council (he will be producing a 10,000 word report on modern methods of growing for his prize) and a signed Angela Easterling print and third placed Chris Greer, currently studying at Writtle College in Essex, won £300 (he will be producing a 5,000 word report on the commercial viability of an NCCPG collection of his choice) plus a signed Angela Easterling print. The remaining finalists each received a cheque for £100 and a signed Angela Easterling print.

This year's competition has seen over 1500 students from across Britain and Ireland taking part in heats and branch finals over recent months, all with the focus of getting to the **National Final at The Eden Project on May 3<sup>rd</sup>**. For the lucky eight contestants it was a hard slog to reach the final, having answered 45 questions in the heats as well as upwards of 40 questions across every aspect of Horticulture in their Branch Finals and they had to identify 24 varied items in the three Branch Final identification rounds, including eight plants, eight pieces of horticultural equipment or materials and eight specimens of pests, diseases and weeds. These finalists had to face another eight rounds of directed and buzzer questions and three further identification rounds before the winner emerged.

Also present at the event were Tony Girard, President of the IoH, Donald Murray Eden Project Curator, Sue Nicholas, Chair of YHoY National Organising Committee, Sue Minter, IoH Hon Sec and Question master for the competition, representatives of the Percy Thrower Trust, Helen Brent of MorePeople, sponsors of the heats and other sponsors. The remaining audience were made up of family and friends of the contestants, representatives of the eight IoH Branches, representatives of the colleges and employers of the contestants and staff from The Eden Project.

### The Competition

- The competition is run in three phases: local heats, Branch Finals and National Final.
- The overall winner collects the Percy Thrower Travel Bursary, worth £2,000, provided by the Shropshire Horticultural Society. This funds a horticultural tour anywhere in the world. Previous YHoY winners have visited New Zealand, the Himalayas, the United States, South America and various parts of Europe.
- There are prizes available at heat and Branch level as well thanks to the competitions sponsors.

### Sponsorship

Major 2008 national sponsors included Shropshire Horticultural Society / Percy Thrower Trust, which funds the Percy Thrower Travel Bursary, MorePeople, Bulldog Tools, Thompson and Morgan, Horticultural Development Council, The Eden Project.

The Institute of Horticulture is interested in hearing from companies who would be willing to offer financial or other sponsorship at all levels of the competition. In the first instance, please contact Mary Porter (IoH Administration Manager) on tel: 020 7936 5957, fax: 020 7936 5958 or email:

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