

Chris Sargent



Industry loves

I often say I believe I have the best job in the world. I live in beautiful Tasmania, get to travel the world and I meet wonderful people with colourful backgrounds and stories. I am welcomed into their lives and businesses. They share their horticultural experiences, and I am entrusted to manage their lifetime passion for developing new plant innovations.

Current Role

Managing Director
Plants Management Australia

Responsibilities

For our clients, I develop new plant varieties for global distribution. I am responsible for plant development processes including tissue culture imports, plant trials, plant licensing marketing and more. For our business, I am responsible for business development, relationship management, business strategy, custom software development, operating procedures, human resources, and company finances.

Skills required

In my role, you need a deep sense of integrity, self-belief and -self-awareness. You need to have both grit and empathy; a willingness to fail and re-learn and you need strong communication and exceptional listening skills. Ultimately, you also need persistence.

Qualifications

Since completing my apprenticeship I have also completed a Diploma of Frontline Management and Human Resources and am a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.

Career Highlight

A highlight would be the people who have nurtured and shared their knowledge with me, empowering my passion for plants. I am now able to share this knowledge with others. That's the power of greenlife - you will never know everything about it and every day is an opportunity for me to learn more.

I'm also very proud of the awards that I personally, and our business have achieved. Recognition through the Telstra Business Awards, AMP Innovation Awards and the Australian Government Export Awards instil in me, that our industry can match it with all the others.



Chris attributes his early passion for plants to his grandmother, Nell Wilson who was a plant collecting pioneer. Nell created a forest of indoor plants in her sunroom which consumed Chris as a child.

"I still have many plants in my house derived of cuttings from my grandmother's sunroom."

Growing up in Hobart, surrounded by Tasmania's pristine environment, Chris spent most of his spare time outdoors, and still does. Instead of following the family footsteps into accounting, Chris forged his own path into horticulture starting a four-year apprenticeship at age 18. His apprenticeship was served in both retail and wholesale greenlife organisations where he gained valuable experience in customer service, merchandising and plant propagation.

"This varied and diverse working environment allowed me to build a foundation of understanding- a cross-section of what horticulture can offer in both a wholesale and retail sectors."

At age 22, Chris travelled to the UK where his apprenticeship helped him land a role in one of the largest and most successful retail garden centres in the UK. This opportunity exposed him to several world leading horticultural expos including the Chelsea Flower Show and internationally renowned garden across Europe where he learnt the international language of horticulture.

"You can be on the other side of the world, in a country where you can't read signs or speak the language, but still be connected to people through plants."

Chris returned to Australia via, Canada, The USA and New Zealand where the international language empowered him to connect the dots between retail and wholesale, plants, people and their stories. He found that if he combined all the skills he had learned, it would provide him with the foundation to guide plant breeders from their initial concepts through to the consumer, and everything in between. The result of this vision was the establishment of a horticultural plant management company.

"Horticulture has literally taken me around the world and back, time and time again. That's the power and scope our industry provides for anyone who wishes to connect with it."