

Mrs Judy Lewis studied Horticulture at Burnley College Melbourne and a member of the Victorian Branch of the ACRS initially as there was no Tasmanian Branch.

The Tasmanian Branch was formed in 1975, of which she is a foundation member. Mrs Lewis was President of the Tasmanian Branch from 1979 – 1989 and again from 1993 – 1995.



Rob Atkinson presenting Judy with her award.

During the years of her presidency she was instrumental in encouraging the Branch to establish a camellia garden at Narryna Heritage Museum in Battery Point. The first meeting was held in April 1979. It was decided to only plant Australian cultivars. Before planting could begin a lot of hard work took place, the garden was very overgrown and mainly contained large agapanthus. The initial planting began in the winter of that year. Regular working bees have been held ever since with tidying, mulching and grafting, installing a watering system, and adding more camellias as funds permitted. The next project was Princess Park Battery Point, where Mrs Lewis encouraged the Society's involvement in establishing a camellia garden in 1982. Members were involved in the planting of this attractive garden, and were present at the initial planting of 100 established plants provided by the Hobart city Council.

While Mrs Lewis was still President, the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanical Gardens welcomed enthusiastically the offer of support in establishing a camellia species section at the gardens in 1982. In 1987 the Tasmanian branch was able to give four new cultivars to the collection Alpen Glo, Roger Hall, Dark Jewell, and Elegans Champagne.

Mrs Lewis was on the Board of the Mary Ogilvie Home for the Aged, and in 1991 her capacity for hard work and her organizing abilities were to the fore once more, as members took on another major project of establishing a camellia garden. Members prepared the garden ready for planting out an initial 30 camellias in 1992. Many Open Gardens were held at "Mawhera" Mrs Lewis' home, with the funds raised going to the Mary Ogilvy garden.

In August in the early years of the Society's yearly show included displays of camellias in the Fitzgerald Auditorium, the Hobart Library, and more recently Centre Point. The wonderful displays of blooms created a great deal of interest in the community and the Society gained more members.

Mrs Lewis was inspirational with ideas for displays, and her artistic creativity was well to the fore.

Mrs Lewis attended National Council Meetings almost every year representing the Tasmanian Branch of the ACRS. The Society's monthly Trade Table always has a good selection of plants from her garden including rare and special specimens, and these are eagerly sought after.

In 1977 the garden at "Mawhera" was winner of The Australian Home Beautiful's National Garden competition. – the prize a return trip to London for two. Mrs Lewis has always encouraged visitors to her garden and is extremely generous in sharing plants and cuttings.

In 1989 the members of the Tasmanian Branch of the ACRS awarded Mrs Lewis the highest honour, the Award of Merit for her years of outstanding service.

Mrs Lewis has given exceptional service to the ACRS in the development of the communities regard for the camellia, encouraging a number of young people to join the Society, and fostering their interest. Mrs. Lewis has at all times been helpful and enthusiastic.

Mrs Lewis has been the driving force of the Tasmanian Society since its inception. Her vast knowledge of camellias has been passed on to members over the years.



Mrs Lewis has established her own seedling and treasures many favourites, which are now around 40 years old. The garden "Mawhera" has been the venue for many special ACRS (Tas) functions, and as recently as 2003 Mrs Lewis hosted the farewell picnic for the Congress, where members were effusive in their admiration.