

## Apple farmer named Syngenta Grower of the Year

Syngenta  
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Jason Shields of Plunkett Orchards receives the Syngenta Grower of the Year Award at Hort Connections 2019, from Syngenta ANZ Territory Head Paul Luxton.

Central Victorian apple grower Jason Shields of Plunkett Orchards has been recognised for his achievements on a national level after receiving the Syngenta Grower of the Year Award at the Hort Connections 2019 conference in Melbourne.

The national award recognises outstanding achievement across all aspects of horticultural production, including growing, environmental management, staff management and quality of produce, and acknowledges grower commitment to innovation and advancing the Australian horticulture industry.

The award is supported by Syngenta, a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources through world class science and innovative crop solutions.

“The Grower of the Year Award is the highest accolade in Australian horticulture and reflects Jason’s dedication to his business and his tireless efforts on behalf of the apple industry, both in Victoria and on a national level,” said AUSVEG CEO James Whiteside.

“Jason has transformed his business into one of the most innovative and successful growing operations in Australia. He excels in tree and orchard management as well as profitability and productivity management, and is clearly able to share these complex considerations with others.

“Jason is a very deserving recipient of the Grower of the Year accolade and we congratulate him on his tremendous success to date.”

Apple and Pear Australia Limited CEO Phil Turnbull added that Jason has led the way in the industry after he researched and implemented ways to improve harvesting management and integrated pest management practices in the orchard.

“Jason is a major contributor to the apple and pear industry and a true mentor to his staff and peers. It is fitting that Jason is the first apple grower to receive the Syngenta Grower of the Year Award and we are excited to see what else is in store for Jason and his business,” he said.

Hort Connections 2019 is a joint initiative between AUSVEG and the Produce Marketing Association Australia-New Zealand (PMA A-NZ), with APAL supporting the event as an industry co-host. It is the premiere event for the Australian horticulture industry’s vegetable, fruit, nut, cut floral and nursery sectors, and attracted around 3,500 local and international delegates to Melbourne from June 24-26.

The National Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner was the capstone event of Hort Connections 2019 and honoured growers and Australian horticulture industry members for their outstanding achievements.