

PG Award for Excellence

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Hugh Skinner Receives 2002 Prairie Garden Award for Excellence

by Yvonne Dean, Editor, **The 2003 Prairie Garden** and current committee member

The 2002 Prairie Garden Award for Excellence was presented to Hugh Skinner at a luncheon held in his honour at Tavern in the Park, Assiniboine Park, October 25, 2002.

Hugh has made a life long career in horticulture, following in the path of his father, the late Dr. Frank Skinner, at Skinner's Nursery, located south of Roblin, Manitoba. He has learned the business literally "from the ground up", learning at an early age how to care for the nursery plants. After earning a BSA in horticulture from the University of Manitoba in 1972, he took over the management of the commercial nursery.

Hugh has held various jobs since then. He worked for the PFRA Shelterbelt Centre at Indian Head, as a traveling agent for Gardening Sales for Western Canada and also for Micro Grow Nurseries of Biggar, Saskatchewan. As well, Hugh has been judging Home Grounds Competitions for flowers, fruit and vegetables in the province and also peony competitions at agricultural fairs.

Hugh has made many improvements to the Skinner nursery over the years. Besides increasing its commercial value by adding buildings, irrigation and improving customer access, he has added to its beauty. In order to share his father's legacy with the public, Hugh and his family have worked with the community since 1994 to raise funds for special projects at the nursery. With the help of the Frank Skinner Arboretum Corporation, Hugh has created a self-guided arboretum trail and rose, shade and perennial gardens to improve the surroundings. His most ambitious undertaking is the creation of the Skinner Introductory Garden. He has been in contact with many botanical gardens and commercial enterprises in North America and Europe to locate Skinner nursery stock developed by his father to bring back to the nursery.

Hugh has shared his knowledge in many ways - through courses for the Prairie Horticulture Certificate program and through speaking engagements with

horticultural organizations and community groups. As well, he gives tours around the Frank Skinner Trail, with an abundance of stories about the plant material and the people responsible for it.

Hugh is continuing to develop Skinner material and run the nursery, contributing to the legacy left him and making it his own. Hugh is a member of the Roblin Horticultural Society.