

# The mammoth of Monbulk



Wes Fleming at Fleming's Nursery's home base in Monbulk.

**F**LEMING'S Nursery has raised the profile of Australian horticulture through its remarkable success at the Chelsea Flower Show in London.

The Monbulk wholesale nursery won a gold medal in the show garden section last year (2008) – its third gold medal in four years.

After its win in May, Fleming's director, Wes Fleming, immediately turned his attention to the following year's show and winning the Best in Show award, appointing designer Scott Wynd to spearhead the entry design.

Mr Fleming has said one of his prime motivations to enter the Chelsea Flower Show was to raise the profile of Australian horticulture at a national and international level.

He could also succeed in raising the profile of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, where 125 nurseries produce \$67 million in sales, or 25% of Victoria's total.

Fleming's Nurseries is a key contributor to the area's economy as it is Australia's biggest supplier of fruit trees.

The company was established in 1930 and is now jointly managed by Wes and his brother Graham.

The brothers have changed the focus of the nursery from bare root trees to encompass advanced trees and landscaping for developers.

The nursery's success at the Chelsea Flower Show showcased this development in the best possible way but also showed the possibilities of using Australian natives.

Despite the change, about 80% of the business is still preparing and selling trees wholesale around the country.

About one million trees are sold each year – year round in containers and bare-root in winter. Container sizes range from 20 centimetres to 400 litre advanced, catering for the burgeoning landscaper market.

The company continually searches out and develops what are considered to be the best performing and improved trees worldwide, while maintaining supply of quality-grown contemporary cultivars.

It employs about 140 full-time staff, making it one of the three largest employers in Monbulk.