

# John Wood McIntyre (1850 – 1931)

John McIntyre was born in Dundee, Scotland, on 3 November 1850, the son of a gardener, Duncan McIntyre, and his wife Ann. The family emigrated, and five days after John's twelfth birthday had a traumatic arrival in New Zealand. At 5.30 am on 8 November 1862 the trading schooner *Tamar*, on which they had sailed from Hobart on the last leg of their journey, was totally wrecked at the entrance to Otago Harbour. The crew and 29 passengers had a narrow escape from drowning, and were rescued with only the clothes they had on.

A foundation pupil at Park School, John left at the age of 15 to work for George Matthews at his central Dunedin nursery and later his large Hawthorne Hill Nursery in Mornington. He lived with the family until his marriage to Jane Glass in 1878, becoming a close friend of George and Eliza's youngest son Henry, nine years his junior. When George died in 1884, McIntyre continued as foreman under Henry Matthews, and together they greatly expanded the native plant side of the business.

In 1896 Henry Matthews joined the Department of Lands and Survey as a forester, and when he died prematurely in 1909 McIntyre continued to tend the Hawthorne Hill garden for Eliza. After her death in 1911 the property was sold. However, the new owner Dr Irwin Hunter, a medical specialist, was also a rugby and garden enthusiast, and retained McIntyre as gardener. They were a good team and made further improvements, renewing the rock garden and planting more native shrubs and alpine plants. McIntyre was an acknowledged authority on the New Zealand flora; he showed interested people around the garden, gave occasional talks to the Horticultural Society and in 1922 was elected a life member.

Irwin Hunter and John McIntyre had close friends with similar botanical interests. Dentist William Alexander Thomson, who would often drop in for a chat, circulated material of a young tree collected by Matthews in Westland and cultivated at Hawthorn Hill. It was described by Cheeseman, and published as *Nothopanax Macintyrei* in the *Manual of the New Zealand Flora* (1925). He wrote, "I have much pleasure in associating with it the name of Mr Macintyre [*sic*] formerly chief gardener to the late Mr H J Matthews, and for many years a most successful cultivator of the New Zealand plants." The species, now known as *Pseudopanax macintyrei*, occurs on calcareous sites in Nelson and North Westland.

After Irwin Hunter's death on 21 December 1929 the house was sold, and McIntyre never returned. He died on 13 September 1931, survived by his wife and five children. His 68 years in New Zealand had been devoted almost entirely to the Matthews and Hunter families, who were both friends and employers, and to Hawthorn Hill.



## ***Pseudopanax macintyrei***

*Pseudopanax* is a genus of about 20 species of evergreen trees or shrubs, often with distinct juvenile and adult foliage. Most are endemic to New Zealand, although a few also occur in Tasmania. *Pseudopanax macintyrei*, the limestone five-finger, is a tree up to 5 metres tall, with grey bark and often purple-tinged branchlets. Leaves are 3–5 foliate, the leaflets dark green and glossy, with a prominent midrib on both surfaces, coarsely and deeply toothed; petioles 1–2 mm long. Flowers are in purple terminal umbels, male and female on separate plants. *Pseudopanax macintyrei* occurs on calcareous sites in Nelson and North Westland.