

botanic gardens

The search for the Young Horticulturist Of the Year

Paul Fitters
lecturer at the Teagasc College,
National Botanic Gardens

The Chartered Institute of Horticulture runs the Young Horticulturist of the Year competition to encourage excellence among those starting out in a career in horticulture.

The competition is run in three phases: local heats that run in the horticultural colleges in both the UK and Ireland; regional finals (Ireland is one region of the CIH) and the grand final where regional winners battle it out to become the Young Horticulturist of the Year.

Each year, a list of 40 multiple choice questions for the local heats is created. Contestants complete the quiz at a set time in their respective colleges and the top eight contestants progress to the regional (Ireland) final.

The regional final on the other hand is more akin to a show, where the eight contestants sit in front of an audience and battle it out through 10 gruelling rounds of questions in various formats: buzzer rounds, plant identifications, directed questions, and even a pest and diseases identification round.

This is a step up from the multiple choice questions of the local heats and rather nerve racking.

Winner

This year, the winner of the Ireland (regional) final is Egle Zinkute, a fourth year student of the DCU/Teagasc, College of Amenity Horticulture course in the National Botanic Gardens. She will now go to Shrewsbury in Shropshire, UK, in May for the grand final.

The overall winner of the competition at the grand final will receive a £2,500 travel bursary from The Percy Thrower Trust, generously provided by the Shropshire Horticultural Society, to undertake a trip, anywhere in the world, to study a subject related to



The Irish Young Horticulturist of the Year 2017, Egle Zinkute, with (from left) Michal Slawski (Bord Bia), Paul Fitters (College of Amenity Horticulture) and Owen Doyle (president of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture).

A set of questions from the buzzer round of the regional final

Find the answers to the questions across the bottom of the page

- 1 Bhutan, Monterey and Scots are all common names for different species of which plant?
- 2 What is a polyphagous pest?
- 3 How many square metres are there in a hectare?
- 4 Name TWO common symptoms of nitrogen deficiency in plants.
- 5 What does the scientific name "Pyracantha" mean?
- 6 The size of young trees in a nursery is normally measured by what?
- 7 Chillington, Draw, Dutch and Trenching are all different types of which garden tool?
- 8 Name TWO major differences between top soil and sub-soil.
- 9 What growing conditions are required to grow Athyrrium, Brunnera and Epimedium?
- 10 The famous Keukenhof Gardens are in which European country?
- 11 What does a dendrologist study?
- 12 Moss growing in lawns is said to be encouraged by three conditions. Name TWO of them.
- 13 What type of storage organ does Zingiber officinalis grow from?
- 14 *Lysichiton americanus* is known as the skunk cabbage but where in a garden might you find it growing?

their chosen field of horticulture.

Finally, the local heats are open to all students of horticulture and young horticultural professionals working in the industry.

So if you are no longer in college,

still under 30 years of age, and are interested in participating, please contact a horticultural college near you next year and ask to be included. In Ireland, the quiz has been generously sponsored by Bord Bia.

ANSWERS: 1 Pinus (pine). 2 One which attacks a wide range of plants, eg slugs. 3 10,000m². 4 Smaller leaf size, older leaves are affected first, yellowing and reddening of older foliage, crop yields are reduced. 5 Pyra means fire. Carthia means thorn. Fire thorn. 6 By stem circumference at 1m above soil level. 7 Hoes. 8 Top soil is darker in colour and contains more organic matter/humus/living organisms. 9 Shady conditions. 10 The Netherlands. Open in spring with mainly bulbs. 11 Trees. 12 Acidic soil. Poor surface drainage. Overhead shade. 13 It grows from a rhizome that is used in cooking. It is stem ginger. 14 It is classified as a marginal aquatic that grows alongside streams and on the edges of ponds and lakes.