

Founder of Hollard Gardens dies

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THE founder of Kaponga's Hollard Gardens, Bernard Hollard, died in Hawera on Friday, a month short of his 94th birthday.

Born at Kaponga in August 1902, Hollard first became interested in gardening at the age of eight when his grandfather dug a vegetable garden for him on the family farm at Kaponga.

In 1927, he took over the farm and fenced off an area of bush which he painstakingly transformed into gardens that formed the basis for the present-day ones.

The gardens were later expanded by Mr Hollard and his wife Rose to include an adjoining swamp.

He spent more than 60 years ploughing the soil by hand, planting a variety of flowers, trees and rare plants — including the "Kaponga" rhododendron — and building surrounding paths and driveways.

He continued working in the 3.8ha gardens, which are known throughout New Zealand and overseas, until the late 1980s.

The Hollards gifted the gardens to the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust in 1982.

Hollard was presented with the Queen's Service Order in 1994 for his community work and was a fellow of the British Royal Horticulture Society.

He is survived by Rose and sons Milton and Thoron (both Wellington).