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N&G NEWS

Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT



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447 Nepean Highway, Brighton East, VIC 3187
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Front Cover: NGINA's industry award winners 2021



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**ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY PRINTING**





2022 Events

CALENDAR



January

Wednesday 19 | Sydney Trade Day

February

Thursday 3 | Board Meeting

Tuesday 8 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 16 | Sydney Trade Day

March

Monday 7 | Board Meeting at Northern Rivers

Tuesday 8 | Northern Rivers Trade Day

Tuesday 8 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 16 | Sydney Trade Day

April

Tuesday 12 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 20 | Sydney Trade Day

May

Tuesday 10 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 18 | Sydney Trade Day

Thursday 26 | Board Meeting

Thursday 26 | Pioneers' Lunch

June

Tuesday 14 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 15 | Sydney Trade Day

July

Tuesday 12 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 20 | Sydney Trade Day

August

Tuesday 9 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 17 | Sydney Trade Day

Monday 29 | Board Meeting at Port Macquarie

Tuesday 30 | Port Macquarie Trade Day

September

Tuesday 13 | Northern Rivers Trade Day

Tuesday 13 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 21 | Sydney Trade Day

October

Tuesday 11 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 12 | Board Meeting

Wednesday 19 | Sydney Trade Day

November

Tuesday 8 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 16 | Sydney Trade Day

December

Friday 2 | Industry Awards & Gala Dinner

Wednesday 7 | Dubbo Trade Day

Thursday 8 | Board Meeting

Wednesday 14 | Sydney Trade Day



2022 Training

CALENDAR



February

Thursday 10 | Provide First Aid | Kenthurst

Thursday 24 | ChemcertAQF111 | Kenthurst

April

Wednesday 6 | ChemcertAQF111 | Alstonville

Thursday 7 | Provide First Aid | Central Coast

May

Thursday 12 | ChemcertAQF111 | Kenthurst

June

Thursday 9 | ChemcertAQF111 | Central Coast

Thursday 23 | Provide First Aid | Kenthurst

August

Wednesday 10 | ChemcertAQF111 | Kenthurst

September

Thursday 23 | Provide First Aid | Kenthurst

November

Thursday 10 | Provide First Aid | Kenthurst

Tuesday 24 | Provide First Aid | Alstonville

Thursday 24 | ChemcertAQF111 | Kenthurst





President's Report

by Malcolm Calder, President, NGINA

The end of 2021 is upon us. It's been a year that has required rapid-fire decisions. A year of lots of demands, lockdowns, vaccinations, and, on top of that, the need to run a business inside covid-safe regulations. It really feels like it's time for a holiday and some family celebrations. We are finally seeing a smoothing out of life living with COVID-19 and all its mutations and variants, and hold some optimism for the new year to come.

As I consider the trajectory of the NGINA over the last five years, I view the last 18 months as being particularly significant. With Anita Campbell firmly in place as our CEO, the Board providing secure wisdom, governance and leadership, capable and qualified staff in key roles, and a strategic plan that is ensuring we deliver progress, the association is positioned to grow. Membership is steadily increasing and a suite of services are being delivered to you with a sincere commitment to seeing our members succeed. No doubt 2022 will provide us with challenges however I believe the Association's foundation and platform is sound and just as importantly, flexible.

I want to particularly acknowledge the Board Directors for their acumen, applied wisdom, hard work on their portfolios and tangible engagement over the past 12 months. It takes a lot of time and effort to carry out this role.

I also want to especially thank my Vice President, David

Jakobs. David, you have stood with me throughout the year, attended every weekly meeting with the CEO, spent countless hours working for the Association and above all applied your constant insights and wisdom when it's been really needed. Thank you.

There are a number of key people who have contributed above and beyond this year and you know who you are. Thank you.

I want to encourage all members, whether a retailer, a production nursery, a landscaper or allied supplier to consider, what do we really want our industry to achieve in 2022. After our two year experience in a most challenging environment, let's unleash some vision, courage and commitment to step up and step out, to engage innovation, and adopt new and exciting methods of operation and promotion.

With a two year boost in greenlife awareness, a strong business environment and a statistically optimistic outlook for 2022, let's not be afraid to invest in growth, continue to support each other and above all, enjoy the journey.

As an Association, the NGINA has a great influence within our domain and beyond. We will strive to be the best we can be.



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Thank you to NGINA partners
for their continued support.

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Bronze





CEO's Report

by Anita Campbell, CEO, NGINA

As I reflect on the past year I am amazed at all the Association and the industry has achieved.

Last year the big story was the COVID-19 pandemic but when new years rolled around this year things weren't magically right in the world again.

The effect of the virus continues and from washing hands to wearing masks we have all accepted and adapted to a new normal.

On 26 June, Greater Sydney was again plunged into a lockdown. This time we thought it would be temporary but as we struggled to control the virus, lockdown was extended, gradually tightened and then expanded into regional NSW. For the first time we had boundaries we weren't allowed to cross, LGAs of concern where some nurseries could only operate as 'click and collect', we had travel permits, and a limit on the number of staff in ACT nurseries.

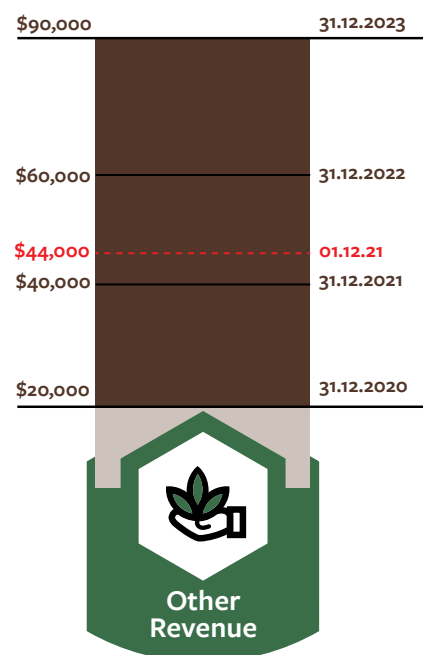
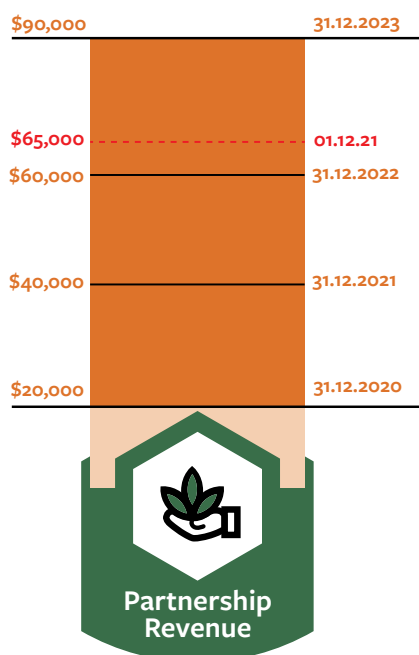
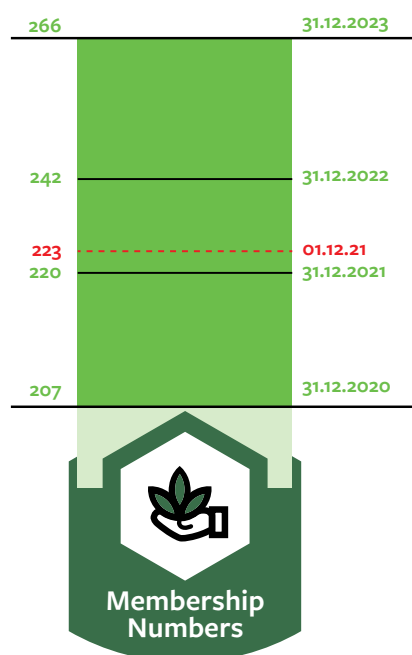
We eagerly awaited the 11am press conference each day and

in the months that followed NGINA was the go-to source for information on everything related to COVID-19. I'm incredibly proud of how we stayed on top of the regulations that sometimes changed multiple times a day. We received the information, digested it and then figured out what was important to members and distributed it immediately. We interpreted the rules, took dozens of calls and received many emails from members every day for months.

We also had communications with ministers and government officials about keeping our industry open. Thankfully the industry successfully lobbied for nurseries in the LGAs of concern to become fully operational again and for the nurseries in the ACT to open on a 'click and collect' basis.

Even through all the disruptions this year we have managed to achieve the KPIs as set out in our strategic plan:

- We have 223 members,
- We have 10 partners, and



- We have reliable alternative revenue streams.

Some big wins this year were:

- The relaunch of the NextGen program with a massive first event at Honeysuckle Park. The second, rescheduled event, with special guest Costa Georgiadis in attendance was held on Thursday, 9 December at Bonnyrigg Garden Centre.
- Promoting a career in horticulture to school students, teachers and career advisors through our basic introduction to horticulture workshops, the hanging garden competition and masterclass.
- Implementing an online member forum each month where we have had half our members participate at least once.
- Purchasing a suited of HR and IR documents for members to access.
- Securing ag skilled funding for the industry and working with TAFE in establishing some courses.

There are so many people I need to thank for making all this happen.

Firstly, our committees support the activities and direction of the Association. I'd like to thank everyone who sits on one of our committees and especially the Chairs:

- Malcolm Calder who is our President and Chair of the Investment Committee.
- Nichole Roberts who was the Chair of the Training and Professional Development Committee.
- John Walsh who chairs our Audit and Risk Committee.
- Tony Matson who chairs our Trade Day Committee.
- John Philiponi and Jack Thorburn who co-chair our NextGen Committee.

And

- Johnathon Steeds who is the Chair of the Hunter/Central Coast Group.
- Lynne Sutherland who is the Chair of our Northern Rivers Group.
- Cameron Blakemore who is the chair of our Growers and Suppliers Group.

Also, none of what we do would be possible without the team of NGINA. We haven't been immune to the 'great resignation' trend and for the last couple of months we have been operating with only 2.5 of us. Kim Duncan-Jones, again, our last person standing has re-commenced Trade day,

rescheduled training classes and organised the fabulously successful Gala Dinner and Industry Awards Event. We would be lost without Amy, our bookkeeper, whose steadiness has really helped us through the last couple of months.

Our new BTSM, Chris O'Connor, started in December and comes with over 20 years' experience across the horticulture and business sectors. As well as strong technical qualifications and knowledge, Chris also brings experience in extension and policy work.

And finally, I would like to congratulate everyone who entered our Awards. The judges all commented they had a really hard time of it this year picking a winner, as every single entry was worthy of taking home a prize. The calibre of the individual people and businesses in our industry is truly extraordinary.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS:

Apprentice of the Year

Phillip Clark – Andreasens Green

Next Genner of the Year

Jessica Watson – Welby Garden Centre

Retail Nursery of the Year (Trading Member)

Burnetts on Barney

Retail Nursery of the Year (Enterprise/Corporate Member)

Burbank House and Garden

Wholesale/Production Nursery of the Year

Scotts Tubes

Allied Supplier of the Year

Vegepod

On Friday, 3 December over 120 people attended our sell-out event at Rydges Norwest. It was fantastic to see so many people in person and a truly great night was had by all. A selection of pictures from the night and information on our winners can be found on pages 10-19.

As we wind down for Christmas I urge everyone to catch their breath and take some time to reflect on everything they have accomplished this year. Enjoy some quality time with family and friends and remember to reach out to those who might be doing it tough over the holidays.

I look forward to catching up with everyone next year. Merry Christmas!



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BTSM's Report

by Chris O'Connor, Business & Technical Support Manager, NGINA

On Friday, 3 December, I was privileged to attend the 2021 NGINA Gala Dinner and Awards presentation. Apart from celebrating the success of our industry, it was a great opportunity to catch up with some of the long-term connections I have made over the years. It was also a great opportunity to make some new introductions, which will be invaluable in my role with NGINA, replacing Craig Perring as your Business and Technical Support Manager.

For those I have not yet had the privilege of working with, I'd like to introduce myself and tell you more about my background.

My career within the industry began with Bunnings where I undertook a number of roles, from working on the shop floor in allied products, through to project management roles and as Buyers Assistant for Greenlife across NSW, ACT, QLD and NT.

Following on from Bunnings, I accepted a role with Mitre10 as Greenlife Buyer for NSW and QLD and later National Plant Buyer. Initially the move was a bit of culture shock, but I rapidly came to grips with both the challenges and strengths of the independent market space and enjoyed working in this new capacity.

In 2012 an opportunity arose to join NGIA as Policy and Technical Officer. In this role I supported the industry through technical communications including the Nursery Papers and developed some of the policies used by industry across water, plant labeling and biosecurity. I was also fortunate to work across a range of areas including the Nursery Production Farm Management System, industry training, and the revisions to the Australia Standard for Treestock AS2303. Whilst at NGIA I was able to deepen my connection with growers and other NGIs across the country.

In 2019 I accepted a role with Macquarie University as Industry Liaison and Outreach Coordinator on a Hort Innovation funded research project developing the Sterile Insect Technique for use with Queensland Fruit Fly (Qfly). The research trial, whilst still underway, has yielded significant reductions in Qfly numbers during challenging conditions both

climatically and as a flow on effect from COVID-19. Whilst Qfly is one of the few pests which has minimal direct impact on the nursery industry, it certainly has significant impact on the rest of horticulture including our customers in both commercial and domestic settings. In this role I developed a great network with the research community and developed a better understanding of the research process.

Complimenting my professional experience I have a Diploma of Business, Bachelor of Horticulture and a Master of Sustainable Agriculture. I am also currently undertaking a Master of Research degree with Macquarie University in applied entomology and biosecurity.

I aim to use both my experience and formal training to bring a level of deep industry knowledge to the role, for the betterment of the industry and your businesses.

Thanks to all as well for the very warm welcome back to the industry that I received at the Awards dinner. I am looking forward to meeting with you all soon, but in the meantime please feel free to contact me.

Contact Chris O'Connor on **0481 172 217**
or email chris.oconnor@ngina.com.au.





NGINA's Industry Awards 2021

The winners of the 2021 Nursery and Garden NSW and ACT (NGINA) Industry Awards were announced at a sell-out gala celebration at Rydges Norwest on Friday, 3 December. Hosted by ABC Presenter, Simon Marnie, the Awards recognised wholesale/production nurseries, retail nurseries, allied suppliers, apprentices and the next generation of industry leaders from across NSW and the ACT.

NGINA CEO, Anita Campbell, took the opportunity to reflect on everything we have all achieved this year. Even through all the disruptions we have managed to achieve the KPIs

as set out in our strategic plan as well as achieving some pretty impressive wins. We should all be proud of what the association has achieved this year. She particularly thanked all NGINA Committee members, the NGINA Board of Directors, NGINA team and the award judges: Judy Horton, Costa Georgiadis, Steve Rixon, Karen Smith, David Ting, Louisa Metcalf, Andy Cameron and Ross Miller.

The first awards of the night were NGINA's recognition awards where we honoured members who have supported the industry and our association for 25 and even 40 years.

► 25-YEAR RECOGNITION AWARDS

The recipients for the 25 Year Recognition Awards:

Botanica Nurseries

Middle Head Palms.

Unfortunately neither could attend but we thank them for their commitment to NGINA and to the industry.

► 40 YEAR RECOGNITION AWARD

Colour Spot Nursery



From left to right: Sharon Maxwell, Kyle Newport and Sarah Wehrle from Colour Spot Nursery



► APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR AWARD: PHILLIP CLARK, ANDREASENS GREEN

The inaugural NGINA Apprentice of the Year Award was judged by Steve Rixon - the Head Teacher of Horticulture at TAFE NSW (Richmond Campus) and a member of the NGINA Training and Professional Development Committee who has helped develop NSW training packages and is an expert at navigating the NSW training system. The NGINA Apprentice of the Year award is presented to an apprentice who has been outstanding in all aspects of their training and demonstrates the relevance of life-long learning.

The criteria aligns with that of the NSW Training Awards and therefore nominees must have completed or be due to complete their training between 1 October 2021 and 30 September 2022 in a training course that leads to a nationally recognised outcome or qualification.

All four finalists were invited to the stage:

Isis – Randwick City Council Nursery

Phillip Clark – Andreasens Green

Benjamin Senior – Glenfield Wholesale Nursery

Sarah Wehrle – Colour Spot Nursery

Craig Williams from Garden City Plastics (NGINA Diamond Partner) presented the award to Phillip Clark from Andreasens Green.

Phillip will be entered into the NSW Apprentice of the Year Awards. If they are chosen as a finalist in those awards, the NGINA Growers and Suppliers Group will buy two tickets to the event and a night of accommodation for our apprentice. We are very grateful to the Growers and Suppliers Group for their support of our rising stars.



From left to right: Steve Rixon, Isis, Phillip Clarke, Sarah Wehrle, Benjamin Senior and Anita Campbell

► LUCKY DOOR PRIZE

Leia Holloway from Vegepod presented Alesa Watt from Kenthurst Nursery with a fantastic champagne bowl filled with medicinal elixirs from Dr Dan Murphys.



Lucky door prize winner Alesa Watt



Alesa Watt and Leia Holloway

► WHOLESALE /PRODUCTION NURSERY OF THE YEAR 2021: SCOTTS TUBES

Malcolm Calder from Transplant Systems (NGINA Silver Partner) presented the Wholesale /Production Nursery of the Year to Scotts Tubes.



Greg and Glenn Scott, and Candice Towne

According to the judges: It's great to see a family combining forces so harmoniously to continuously improve efficiency, productivity and working conditions for their staff. The results in their main market shares (tubes and herbs) both very unforgiving, with little room for error, speak volumes to the effort they put in, adaptability and attention to detail. They are to be congratulated for embracing these challenges with such fervour. They have utilised available space and resources to maximum effect and if the new greenhouse provides an indication of the quality of future development, the next few years look very exciting.

David Ting RH, The Garden Guide, Louisa Mettam RH RLA, Mettamorphic Landscape Architecture Hort4Kidz

► RETAIL NURSERY OF THE YEAR (TRADING MEMBER): BURNETTS ON BARNEY

The two retail nursery categories were judged in part by a mystery shop (40%) and by Karen Smith from Gardens on the Go (40%). Karen is the editor of Hort Journal and as the owner of Gardens on the Go she is also a Horticultural Trainer, Presenter, MC, Writer and Podcaster.

The two retail awards were presented by David Jakobs from Oasis Horticulture (NGINA Gold Partner). David presented the Retail Nursery of the Year (Trading Member) to Burnetts on Barney.

Elizabeth told the audience how her dad had lent her \$40,000 and told her to follow her dreams. While it doesn't sound like much it obviously paid off!

The judge in this category said: They have really embraced the recycled, reuse strategy and sustainability. Many of the fixtures and fittings have been built from totally recycled materials with the retail display centre being made from shipping containers.

I was impressed by the community involvement with their Crop & Swap, initiative called Grounded Gardeners and their connection with local garden clubs and school children. I am not surprised they recently won a business award for excellence in sustainability. Burnetts is on an upward trajectory.

Karen Smith MAIH, Editor, Hort Journal Australia, Owner, Gardens on The Go



Elizabeth Burnett and Susan Finn

► **RETAIL NURSERY OF THE YEAR (CORPORATE/ENTERPRISE MEMBER): BURBANK HOUSE AND GARDEN**

David presented the Retail Nursery of the Year (corporate/enterprise member) to Burbank House and Garden.



The Burbank House and Garden Team



Simon Marnie, Phil Taylor and Vickey Taylor

► **ALLIED SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR: VEGEPOD**

James Maitland from Ozbreed (NGINA Diamond Partner) presented Vegepod with the Allied Supplier of the Year.

According to the judge: Vegepod is a unique product with innovative features creating a distinctive offer delivering value to their identified customer segment. With its innovative design, Vegepod has enabled individuals to enjoy gardening regardless of their age or ability.

Vegepod utilises a B2B and B2C model engaging through various channels identifying the need for education and relationship management. This engagement flows through to their workplace, with business development and personal growth of their team.

Andy Cameron, Agnov8, Dip Hort, CNP



James Maitland and Pete Konert

► NEXT GENNER OF THE YEAR: JESSICA WATSON, WELBY GARDEN CENTRE

Our two judges, Judy Horton OAM and Costa Georgiadis both felt very privileged to judge the Next Genner Award. This award recognises the effort and achievement of a young person in our industry (up to age 35). Factors for consideration may be exemplary customer service, development of skills, dedication to their role or meritorious formal training outcomes.

There were four amazing finalists all with very special qualities to offer. All had stepped up in these difficult COVID-hit times and taken on challenging roles. They were all young ladies who had proved that they could work with others, care for customers, set up new systems and think about sustainability and the future of our industry. The four finalists were:

Charlotte MacPherson – Cameron’s Nursery

Melanie Sadleir – Alpine Nurseries

Jessica Watson – Welby Garden Centre

Olivia Wilson – Andreasens Green

According to Costa “The standard across all the nominees had all the earmarks of a judges nightmare. Each and every one of you are standing up and really making a go of your current pathway in the nursery industry”.

However there can only be one winner and the judges were particularly blown away by Jessica Watson.



Judy Horton OAM congratulates Jessica Watson



From left to right: Charlotte Macpherson, Jessica Watson Judy Horton, Olivia Wilson and Melanie Sadler

Thank you to all our judges and presenters and of course to Kenthurst Nursery for supplying the stunning trees at our event, Tropical Plant Rentals for their transportation and installation, and to Independent Garden Centres for lending us the beautiful table centrepieces.





Evan Mueller and Julia Wokes



All of the winners



From left to right: Malcom Calder, NGINA President, Anita Campbell, NGINA CEO and David Jakobs, NGINA Vice President



Award attendees strike a pose



Emcee Simon Marnie 'bombs' the team from Garden City Plastics



Apprentice of the Year 2021 — Phillip Clark

WHEN, WHERE AND HOW DID YOU START IN THE INDUSTRY?

I started in September 2020 as an apprentice at Andreasens Green Wholesale Nursery. I was previously working in the finance industry and was fortunate enough last year, to be able to re-assess my career and head down a greener path which felt right for me.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR COURSE?

I am currently completing my Certificate III in Production Nursery. This opportunity was made available via my apprenticeship with Andreasens Green.

HOW HAS IT CHANGED OR IMPACTED ON YOU?

I have learnt an incredible amount about horticulture and production nursery operations however a lot of what I have learnt, is very transferrable to horticulture at home. I have always had a keen interest in plants, gardens and sharing knowledge. Now I find I am using snippets of what I have learnt at TAFE in my own garden, and I'm always talking horticulture to whoever is listening.

WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED FROM YOUR COURSE?

I have gained an incredible amount of confidence and knowledge. I have also gained lifelong friendships with some amazing like-minded people.

HAVE YOU HAD TO ADDRESS ANY CHALLENGES THAT HAVE IMPACTED ON YOUR TRAINING?

I have been fortunate not to have experienced any challenges that have impacted on my training. Through a combination of working at the nursery and studying at TAFE, I have felt right at home from day dot. It has all been smooth sailing so far.

WHAT ROLE DO YOU CURRENTLY UNDERTAKE?

I am currently a Maintenance Team Leader at Andreasens Green where my team and I look after all the 300mm stock on site. This covers everything from irrigation, pruning, staking, fertilising and other maintenance duties.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED?

The biggest challenge for me was trying to find a sense of belonging after changing careers from commercial finance to a production nursery.



WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THESE CHALLENGES?

I learnt that there are some challenges that you can't overcome by yourself. I found that if I had moments where I was doubting myself, there were many people who were all willing to listen and offer support and guidance to help me find that self-belief that kept me going. I've come across many wonderful people in the industry from teachers like Steve Rixon and bosses/mentors such as Jon Philliponi and Dan Ewings. They have been there for me every time I needed it.

WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?

I have found the nursery and garden industry to be full of so many amazing people that love to share and teach. I love that the more I learn, I can then pay it forward and offer up my teachings to new people that I come across in the industry. It is so rewarding working with plants and every day, I find myself growing alongside them.

TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS?

A wise man once told me, to learn any subject matter you need motivation, and to have that motivation, you need to have an interest. I believe my strong interest in horticulture

Phillip impressed with his persistence to "get it right" and demonstrating advanced skills for someone that is relatively new to the industry.

His selection of fertilisers, concentrations and application to elicit the best plant response was outstanding when tasked with formulating a number of liquid feeds in parts per million for the specialist crop Hydrangea.

His Production Manager commented "best apprentice ever, excellent work ethic, constantly sourcing information and developing resources to a high standard".

Judge: Stephen Rixon, Head Teacher Horticulture, Production & Retail Nursery, Parks & Gardens, TAFE NSW

is the foundation that my successes have been built upon. So thank you Steve Rixon for being that wise man.

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE IN, SAY, 10 YEARS' TIME? WHAT'S YOUR FUTURE PLAN?

In 10 years, I hope I am a well known name within the industry that up and comers will aspire to be like. My future plan is to support, encourage and guide some of the incredible talent that is coming through the industry whilst still getting my hands dirty in the soil.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO GIVE SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Jump in boots and all, embrace the work and study, and remember you don't have to go it alone. Ask lots of questions and rely on the support and guidance of the amazing people that cross your path. It's a fun journey, so enjoy the ride.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE WON APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR 2021?

Winning the Apprentice of the Year 2021 was such a humbling experience as there are so many wonderful apprentices out there. For me, it really reaffirms that I belong in the industry and I can't wait to see what 2022 and beyond holds for me.

TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOU, ANYTHING AT ALL.

I once helped paint a not-for-profit youth centre with some mates in order to win tickets to a Guy Sebastian concert.

Next Genner of the Year 2021

— Jessica Watson



WHEN, WHERE AND HOW DID YOU START IN THE INDUSTRY?

Welby Garden Centre is my first job in the industry. I started in early 2020. After 10 years in hospitality, I was ready for a change. Funny story - I had approached my current boss Justin about work, and was told to come back when the drought was over. A few months later he called me. Little did we know, we were heading into the huge industry boom that the past 18 months has been. As COVID restrictions were in full swing at the time, and all the schools/TAFE were closed, I signed on to do my Horticulture course through TAFE Digital – their online platform. This has worked incredibly well for me, as self-paced learning is how I learn best. I have absolutely loved studying this way.

WHAT'S YOUR BACKGROUND, E.G., EDUCATION, WORK EXPERIENCE TO DATE?

I grew up in Canberra, and spent most of my adult years in the hospitality field, café management etc. In my late 20s after a long-term relationship break down, I moved to the Southern Highlands and I started working at a local winery.

After starting a family, I found myself looking for something with a better work life balance. All my spare time was spent in my home garden, and it was what I loved to do, so it just made sense to pursue it as a career.

WHAT ROLE DO YOU CURRENTLY UNDERTAKE?

I'm part of the Retail team at Welby Garden Centre (we also have a growing/propagation team and garden maintenance teams). My day to day is mostly filled with serving customers, phone/email enquiries and general upkeep such as watering and updating displays.

I deal with the incoming stock each week and manage a small team to ensure customer orders are separated from shop stock, all stock is barcoded correctly and put away in the right place.

I am also responsible for all of our social media accounts, marketing projects and webstore design/development. Oh, and I'm the WHS Representative for the nursery team too.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED?

I think just the sheer volume of sales over the past 18 months has been the biggest challenge. I had to learn a lot, very quickly. We're currently finding it difficult to find staff – there just isn't enough of us to comfortably handle the volume we are doing.



Jessica has expanded her skills remarkably over the past year and has regarded the challenges brought about by the pandemic as a series of opportunities, rather than causes for doom and gloom.

We admired the diversity of her contribution: the way she worked with the special employees at the garden centre, the way she had used and expanded her talents in IT and web promotion, and the work she was putting into the local community garden, bush regeneration and the creation of an indigenous garden.

Judges: Judy Horton, OAM MAIH RH HMA and Costa Georgiadis, Landscape Architect, Author, TV Host

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THESE CHALLENGES?

I learnt how tight knit our team is here. We're like family. Everyone is giving 110% all the time, and very supportive of each other's needs.

WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?

I love helping people achieve their dream gardens. I love spending time getting to know people and talking through their options for their garden space. I enjoy when people return with photos of what they've done after my advice, and a plan to tackle the next area.

TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS?

My support network and my self-determination. My mum raised me knowing I can achieve anything I put my mind to. My family and partner are very supportive, and that helps a lot. My boss and other senior staff are encouraging, and always have an answer and explanation to my questions.

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE IN, SAY, 10 YEARS' TIME? WHAT'S YOUR FUTURE PLAN?

Hopefully working for myself in a garden design/consulting aspect. I love dealing with people and helping them create the space they want.

I'd love to be able to only work a few days a week, freeing up some time for volunteering. We're in the process of building a Community Garden here at Welby and I am invested in seeing it through and being a part of it. Having the opportunity to offer a safe space for people to feel empowered to create, really appeals to me. I can't wait to watch it grow.

I also enjoy writing, so some online blog/magazine aspect may be in my career development path as well.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO GIVE SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Read! Spend all of your spare time reading. The more you learn, the more you realise you don't know. Unlimited knowledge is the internet's greatest gift - use it. Your knowledge base is what will separate you from the pack.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE WON NEXT GENNER OF THE YEAR 2021?

I feel incredibly humbled to be recognised for my efforts. To be among three other women, as finalists, is also pleasing. In an industry dominated by men in the spotlight, I feel honoured to represent the hardworking women behind the scenes.

TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOU, ANYTHING AT ALL.

I am currently reading the Lord of the Rings to my one-year-old as our bedtime routine book.



NGINA has joined Instagram.

Follow us to see what's happening!





NGINA_NSWANDACT



Label company revolutionises plant tags

There is a new plant tag product on the market for plant breeders, growers and retail nurseries.

Guru Corporation Pty Ltd, who acquired Tytags, have released a new range of printed plant tags and they guarantee low prices with fast delivery. Their products include perforated printed plant tags on a roll and tags with QR codes that offer a wealth of additional information in one scan.

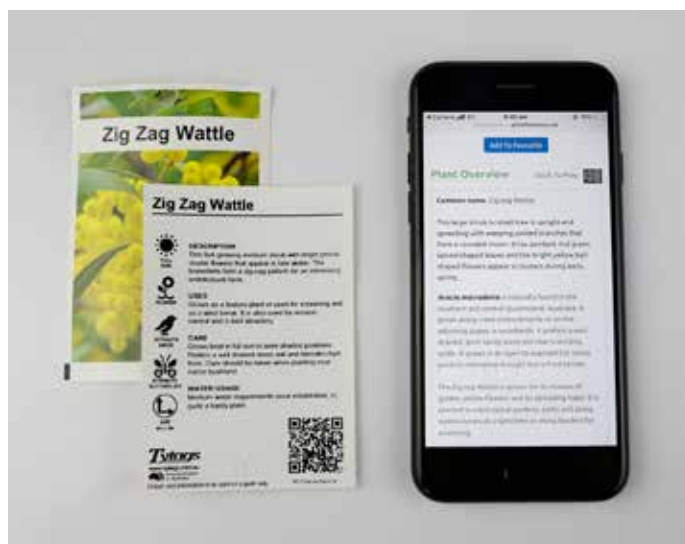
Sales Director Nick Lowe says “For decades, the choice for horticultural buyers has been very limited. As a printing manufacturer that sells direct, we are revolutionising the plant tag market. We can offer very low prices with reduced lead times for custom products. Our state-of-the-art facility is located on the NSW Central Coast. As well as industry leading turnaround times, first class customer service is guaranteed.”

Tytags has partnered with PlantFile to source up-to-date horticultural information and images for the tags. Their new QR codes allows customers to scan and review additional information at their leisure.

“Tytags has always been at the forefront of the industry, having delivered the first DIY tag and label software for printing cost-effective tags and labels on demand,” said Nick.

“Perforated printed tags on a roll are a similar game changer. Rolls are easy to carry, and staff can simply tear off as required. Tags are available in small quantities with mix and match variations to save on storage and reduce wastage. Their artwork department can use existing designs or create something new. Individual printed tags are also available and very well priced,” said Nick

For more information view the catalogue inserted into this magazine or visit tytags.com.au, email cs@gurucorp.com.au or call **1300 852 686**.



More cane toads found in Sydney nurseries

The NSW Government is calling on the nursery industry to keep an eye out and report cane toad sightings after an increase in incursion in the Greater Sydney region.

Greater Sydney Local Land Services and NSW DPI have received and responded to more than five reports of cane toads from wholesale and retail nurseries this year alone. The cane toads are suspected to arrive in shipments of nursery plants from Queensland.

Historically, there has been only one known cane toad outbreak in Sydney, occurring at Taren Point (Sutherland Shire) in 2010. The control program saw approximately 500 cane toads removed in the first two years and after the continuation of the program for several years, cane toads have not been found in the Sutherland Shire since 2014.

Cane toads pose a serious biosecurity threat in Australia and are considered a pest because they:

- poison pets and injure humans with their toxins
- poison many native animals whose diet includes frogs, tadpoles and frogs' eggs
- eat large numbers of honey bees, creating a management problem for bee-keepers
- prey on native fauna
- compete for food with vertebrate insectivores such as small skinks, and
- may carry diseases that are can be transmitted to native frogs and fishes.

Cane toads are well established in much of Queensland and parts of the Northern Territory. They are also established in coastal areas of Northern NSW as far south as Maclean.

Authorities continue to receive reports of cane toads found at wholesale and retail nurseries.

In 2021, NSW Government agencies have collected more than 10 cane toads from nurseries in Greater Sydney. Female toads are tested for fertility and follow up surveillance is often needed to ensure a breeding population does not establish.

Nursery operators need to be aware of the biosecurity risks associated with their business, and particularly the increased risk of cane toads arriving in shipments of plants from Queensland, Northern Territory and Northern NSW. Shipments of plants from these areas must be thoroughly inspected immediately after they arrive.

All members of the public can help keep their local area safe by reporting any sightings to NSW DPI.

Cane Toad Biosecurity Zone



Cane Toad Identification



Anyone coming from cane toad infested areas such as Queensland or the Northern Territory are asked to check their luggage, vehicle or trailer to ensure they are not bringing a cane toad into NSW.

A suspected cane toad should be immediately reported to NSW DPI Biosecurity through its helpline on 1800 680 244, by completing the online form, or emailing a photo of the face and details to invasive.species@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Find out how to identify cane toads. dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/vertebrate-pests/nia/key-new-incursions-species/new-incursions/cane-toad.

New Booklets Encourage Australian Students to Explore a Gardening Career

Choosing the right career can be a daunting prospect, and not everybody starts out working in the right job or the right industry for them. Brad Pitt once worked as a chicken mascot for a fast-food chain. Whoopi Goldberg has 'mortuary beautician' on her résumé. Johnny Depp sold ballpoint pens over the phone, and Ellen DeGeneres has painted houses, sold vacuum cleaners and shucked oysters for a living.

While all of them have survived and thrived, what it tells us is that almost everybody could use some well-intentioned career advice at the right time. For many, the most important time is when the days start counting down towards their last term at school.

If you are reading this magazine, then you already know of the rewards and fulfilment that come from working with plants—the beautiful environments, the variety of work and the joys of cultivation. Yet, as an industry, Australia wide, we have not always excelled at spreading the word and letting the rest of the country in on the joys of our industry. We have not joined the dots for people who enjoy gardening as a hobby, to see it as a career.

That's where two new career booklets from the Australian Garden Council come in. The booklets have been designed to inspire school students with the sheer variety of career pathways in gardening and ornamental horticulture. They hope to fire the imagination and encourage students to explore the possibilities in the industry. The booklets' message that gardening is the opportunity to change the world—*"to heal the planet, cool our cities, nurture our environment and thrive"*—has never been timelier.

The Australian Garden Council's key priorities are to actively engage, support and promote education and career employment opportunities for young people at both state and local levels, and to help resource gardening skills and knowledge growth and development. The booklets have been funded as part of a project for the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and were officially launched by the Federal Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia, Hon. David Littleproud MP in August 2021.

The early response to the new booklets has been outstanding with students advising they are now looking at gardening through a completely new lens. The booklets have been distributed in schools and at career expos and the Australian

Garden Council would appreciate NGINA members' assistance in sharing the books to an even wider audience. For some FREE booklets (they have lots!) please email info@gardencouncil.org requesting copies.

For more information visit The Australian Garden Council at gardencouncil.org/.




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Water Disinfestation

by Emma De Landre, Plant Protection Officer, NSW, GIA

Irrigation water used for nursery production should be regularly monitored for quality in line with industry best management practice. This process starts at the water source. It is a mandatory requirement for businesses in the NIASA accreditation program to disinfest surface water used to irrigate crops.

Surface water, which includes water from rivers, lakes, dams and ponds, inevitably captures runoff, and can harbour harmful plant pathogens which are not visible to the human eye however can be transported in water and soil particles. Plant pathogens such as *Phytophthora spp*, *Cylindrocladium spp* and *Chalara elegans* can't be eradicated from an infected crop which is why prevention is key to reduce potential crop losses. It is not necessary to disinfest bore or potable water that has already been treated as there is a very low risk of contamination.

PLANNING

Production nurseries need to consider a range of factors when choosing a water disinfestation system before engaging an irrigation designer and obtaining quotes. Planning, as with any project, is likely to save time and money in the long term. Some factors that need to be considered are:

- Layout – measure the distance water travels from the pump to the closest irrigation outlet.
- Flow rates – record the maximum flow rate required for irrigation in peak seasons.

- Pipe sizing – know pipe sizes (diameter), the designer will calculate losses due to friction.
- Filtration – ensure that the existing filtration system is adequate and upgrade if necessary.
- General water quality – obtain an analytical water quality test from a laboratory to verify pH levels which may determine the method of disinfestation used. Other elements and subsequent treatments, such as high iron, may also impact decision making.

Surface water is often filtered and then treated in tanks to ensure the adequate contact time is achieved. Disinfestation via direct injection using liquid Chlorine, Chloro bromine, Chlorine dioxide, Ozone or Iodine will only be successful if there is sufficient contact time. If unsure, time how long it takes for water to travel from the pump to the first outlet or valve.

DISINFESTATION METHODS

NIASA accredited businesses may use any of the approved disinfestation methods they choose as long as that method meets the required criteria. The full list of approved methods, and the requirements for each one, are listed in **Table 1** below. For example- when using Ozone, the residual level after a contact time of 16 mins should be a minimum of 1.4PPM. Each method that has been approved, and is outlined in the NIASA Production Nursery Guidelines, has been researched extensively to verify efficacy against plant

Table 1. NIASA approved Disinfestation Methods (Source: NIASA Best Management Practice Guidelines)

CHEMICAL DISINFECTANTS				
Name	Residual level after contact time (ppm)	Effective water pH range	Contact time (minutes)	Comments
Chlorine	2.5	20	5.5 – 7.5	Decreased efficacy at higher pH
Chloro bromine	3	8	5.5 – 9.0	Increase contact time at higher pH
Chlorine dioxide	3	8	5.0 – 10.0	Increased efficacy with higher pH
Ozone	1.4	16	Nil	Requires complete mixing into water
Iodine	5	30	Nil	Increased efficacy at approx. 20°C

NON-CHEMICAL DISINFESTATION	
Name	Treatment regime
Ultrafiltration	<0.1µm
UV irradiation	>60% UV transmittance at 254µm
Slow Flow Filtration (SFF) (**)	≤100L/hr/m ² flow rate

**** Note:** If rockwool is used as the filtering medium in SFF, it must be granulated premium superflock rockwool.



Image 1. National Arboretum Canberra – bore water is combined with surface water, filtered then treated with chlorine via direct injection.

pathogens. Each method has pros and cons which is why it's important to do your research and obtain independent technical support when required.

Chlorine is commonly used however not effective for treating water with a pH above 7.5, so in situations where

the water pH is higher than 7.5 Chlorine dioxide would be a better choice as it remains active in water with a pH up to 10. Ultraviolet radiation is an environmentally friendly option however water must be free of suspended materials, tannins, excess iron and manganese before treatment. Invest in a good filtration system and ensure that it is well maintained, this can greatly reduce ongoing running costs associated with disinfection. For example - when using Chlorine, less chemical will be required if there is less organic matter and/or suspended material in the water to be treated.

MONITORING

To ensure that the disinfection system is working as intended it is important to monitor against the relevant criteria. Include a handover period in contracts or agreements with designers and installers which allows for testing. NIASA businesses, and those working towards NIASA accreditation, are now provided with free training to assist with measuring and recording residual chlorine levels (for Chlorine, Chloro bromine and Chlorine dioxide). For more information on this and other Mini Technical Skills Courses available contact emma.delandre@greenlifeindustry.com.au

The NIASA Best Management Practice manual can be found at: NIASA Accreditation – Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS). There is also a range of free technical information available at: Irrigation & Water – Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS)



Image 2. Scott Tubes, Peats Ridge NSW – shows an ozone disinfection system, the dam water is filtered then treated with Ozone to achieve the required residual (1.4PPM) for a minimum contact time of 16 minutes.



Senior Technician Paul Drop (centre)
with customers Sandhu & Chouhan Primary Producers

Powerplants Australia: Representing global horticultural brands on a local level

Powerplants Australia has over 25 years' experience in working with growers, wholesalers, researchers and government authorities and is a leading figure in the horticultural and controlled environment agriculture industries with a proven history of advancing Australia's plant production and food sustainability.

The company specialises in greenhouse technology that includes climate solutions, fertigation and recycling systems, and labour-saving technologies. The backing of Dutch company PB tec widens Powerplants international reach and strengthens the horticultural knowledge used to develop targeted solutions. Powerplants' continual investment in global product research and development means their solution will suit any type of condition. In addition to this their nationwide

network and dedicated team of hands-on specialists means all customer have access to 24/7 service and spare parts.

Local Powerplants service representatives are available across all Australian states and New Zealand, providing clients with a direct point of contact for accessing industry knowledge and advice. Priva-trained and -certified technicians are also available through Powerplants, providing clients with access to professional installation, training, maintenance and advice when needed.

Senior Technician, Paul Drop, is a testament to this service. A certified Priva technician, Paul specialises in Control Systems and Process Automation and works on-site with Powerplants customers across Australia. Representing



Powerplants for over 7 years, he has worked with a large share of the company's clients and his work puts a face to the Powerplants name for many growers. As a long-term, valued employee he has become a trusted contact for many customers – a highly-valued position maintained by numerous Powerplants staff located across Australia and New Zealand.

As well as Priva, the company also represents well-known European brands such as Javo, Signify, Agri.com and Flier, with technology to support vine crops, berry crops, leafy greens, medicinal cannabis and cut-flower growers. This broad product offering and application is of great benefit to the Australian horticultural industry but it's the local support and personal connection with clients that sets Powerplants apart.

The experienced team of designers, engineers and project managers work with customers to design the ideal operation, engineer customer systems, supply innovative technologies, increase production capabilities and manage projects through to the end.

From providing greater support for growers and farmers to simply improving the quality of food people eat, Powerplants' goals have always been targeted toward the betterment of others, and it's the company's commitment to innovation and collaboration that has seen it become a key enabler to food sustainability within Australia.

Connect online through the Powerplants website, or social media channels on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.



BECOME A STAND HOLDER



Have you ever considered becoming a stand holder at our Sydney Trade Day? With more interest in our market than ever before the time is ripe.

Trade Day provides a great opportunity to meet new customers and service existing ones, and keep up to date with what's going on in the industry.

Get maximum exposure by advertising in our Trade Day email, which is sent out to over 2,500 people in the industry. Our new stand holders have reported fantastic pre-market sales and their customers benefit from the convenience of collecting multiple orders and purchasing stock all in the one location.

If you would like to know more, please contact NGINA HQ for more details.

t: (02) 9679 1472 | e: info@ngina.com.au



**Nursery & Garden Industry
NSW & ACT**

Do you have a Workplace Bullying Policy?

WHAT IS BULLYING?

According to the Fair Work Commission, Workplace bullying occurs when:

- an individual or group of individuals **repeatedly** behaves **unreasonably** towards a worker or a group of workers **at work**,

AND

- the behaviour creates a **risk to health and safety**. The risk to health and safety can be either psychological or physical or both.

Examples of bullying include:

- offensive language, yelling, screaming, verbal abuse, rudeness,
- excluding or isolating employees from team activities,
- ridicule, insults, belittling opinions, patronising titles or nickname,
- deliberately changing work rosters to inconvenience a particular employee,
- giving employees deliberately impossible assignments, or
- withholding information necessary to perform work.

It can occur between a worker and a manager; workers and supervisors, or co-workers.

Bullying does NOT include:

- genuine and reasonable disciplinary procedures,
- genuine and reasonable performance management – constructively delivered feedback or counselling, or directing and controlling how work is done, or
- fair and constructive feedback on workers' performance.

GETTING IT WRONG

It is widely accepted that bullying behaviour can have serious consequences on an individual's mental and physical health and wellbeing. For this reason, bullying is treated as a serious workplace health and safety (WHS) issue and has attracted significant attention from regulators.

An employee who has been subjected to bullying has a number of options for making complaints about the conduct. Most commonly these involve:

- a complaint to the Fair Work Commission under the anti-bullying provisions of the Fair Work Act,
- complaining to WorkCover that is empowered to

investigate incidents that pose a risk to employee health and safety,

- lodgement of a workers compensation claim where workplace bullying has resulted in the employee suffering a mental or physical injury,
- lodgement of an equal opportunity complaint if the bullying conduct also meets the legal definition of discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation, or
- making a claim that the employer has breached the implied contractual term of 'mutual trust and confidence' and, accordingly is liable for damages to the employee.

WHS laws continue to apply alongside the federal anti-bullying laws under the Fair Work Act which means the employer could be subject to the same penalties as any serious workplace safety breach – \$3 million for a company, and \$600,000 or five years' imprisonment for an individual.

If the Fair Work Commission is satisfied that a worker has been bullied while at work, and that the bullying would otherwise continue, it may make an order it considers appropriate. While no compensation can be ordered, contravening a stop bullying order can be subject to penalties of up to \$10,800 for an individual or \$54,000 for a body corporate.

Importantly, the provisions may not only relate to confines of a physical workplace. For example, employers who allow employees to use social media at work may find that even instances of conduct that take place outside of business hours are susceptible to orders by the Fair Work Commission.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PREVENT WORKPLACE BULLYING?

Employers should take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying before it becomes a risk to the health and safety of its workers and others in the workplace. This is best achieved through a risk management process. This process should include:

- identification of bullying risk factors,
- assessment of the likelihood of bullying occurring from the risk factors identified and their potential impact on the workers or workplace,
- eliminating the risks, as far as reasonably practicable, or controlling, or minimising, them as far as reasonably practicable, and



- reviewing the effectiveness of the control methods put in place and the process generally.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMMON RISK FACTORS WHICH MAY LEAD TO BULLYING?

Bullying can be the result of a number of different factors in a workplace. Some risk factors which make bullying more likely to occur are:

- **Organizational change** - i.e. significant change in the workplace that may lead to job insecurity such as restructure, introduction of technology, change in management.
- **The company's culture** – the company's values, views and beliefs can either expressly or implicitly encourage bullying behaviours.
- **Negative leadership styles** – such as strict, autocratic management styles, which do not allow for flexibility or involvement by employees; or passive management styles which are characterized by a tendency to avoid decisions, inadequate supervision and little guidance to workers.
- **Inappropriate systems of work** – such as excessive workloads, unreasonable timeframes, uncertainty about roles and how they should be performed, and lack of employee support.
- **Poor work relationships** – can be characterized by poor communication, negative relationships with supervisors or colleagues, excessive criticism by manager and the exclusion or isolation of workers.
- **Workforce characteristics** – a company's workforce may be made up groups of workers who may be at a higher risk of bullying because of certain characteristics: for example, young workers, new workers, apprentices, injured workers, workers in a minority group because of their race, disability, religion, gender or sexual preference.

HOW DO I GET A WORKPLACE BULLYING ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST AND A WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY?

Through our partnership with Business Australia, NGINA members can now purchase legally compliant documents from NGINA at a significantly subsidized rate. The library contains over 200 policies, contracts, forms, checklists and general correspondence which are all written and maintained by the Workplace Relations Team at Australian Business Lawyers and Advisors.

The Workplace Bullying Assessment Checklist has been developed to assist employers in their duty to identify, assess, eliminate and/ or control bullying in the workplace, taking into account the common risk factors.

A Workplace Bullying Policy has been developed to assist employers in meeting their legal obligations under the Work Health and Safety Legislation and the Fair Work Act and thereby to eliminate or minimise bullying in the workplace. The policy provides that bullying will not be tolerated and presents mechanisms for disciplining those who engage in such behaviour in the workplace. In addition, the policy provides formal and informal mechanisms for dealing with any complaint relating to bullying.

All workers (and others in the workplace, where possible) should be made aware of the policy, the standards that are expected of them and the consequences for breaching the policy. Training sessions about the policy should (as a minimum) take place as part of the induction of new workers and in specific training sessions for existing workers. However, your workers should be reminded of the policy on a regular basis.

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Ask an Expert

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF 'ASK AN EXPERT'.

The Ask an Expert column is a chance for the NGINA community to ask any of your burning questions and we'll find an expert in the field to answer it for you.

Your question can be sent to info@ngina.com.au and will be passed on to the NGINA Training & Development Committee who will source the answer!

This edition the question comes from nursery student, Phillip Clark, who works at Andreasen's Green, Kemps Creek.

► QUESTION:

I recall being taught how to convert the NPK on a Controlled Release Fertiliser (CRF) to a ratio and just wanted to double check.

This CRF is 16 : 3.5 : 10

The ratio converts to 4.57 : 1 : 2.85

The growing on ratio usually advised to use is 3: 0.15 : 2

I recall being advised you take the lowest number and divide that into itself then divide it into the others. If this is the case, phosphorus should usually be the lowest number so dividing this into itself would give a P rating of 1.

How do you go about getting the ratio of 0.15? Or does that growing on ratio only apply to liquid feed?

► ANSWER:

Stephen Rixon, Head Teacher Horticulture, Richmond College, TAFE NSW

That's the correct calculation for the CRF. Just remember, the CRF 16:3.5:10 are expressed as percentages (%) of nutrients, as we learn about fertilisers it is helpful to reduce them to a ratio so we can compare products and understand how plants respond to the different N:P & N:K ratios.

The growing on ratio for liquid feeds (as a general rule) is 3:0.15:2. Growers used to use more Phosphorous when soil was added to potting mixes.

CRF: When you peel another layer off the onion – it's the rate of solubility for each element overtime at different temperature ranges that gives you the actual NPK, (what's on the bag is only the starting point). *Not to mention the

impact of variations in prill diameter per bag.

The following graph shows how different CRF product longevities perform at different temperature ranges and also compares three CRFs. There are significant differences and not what you would expect either!

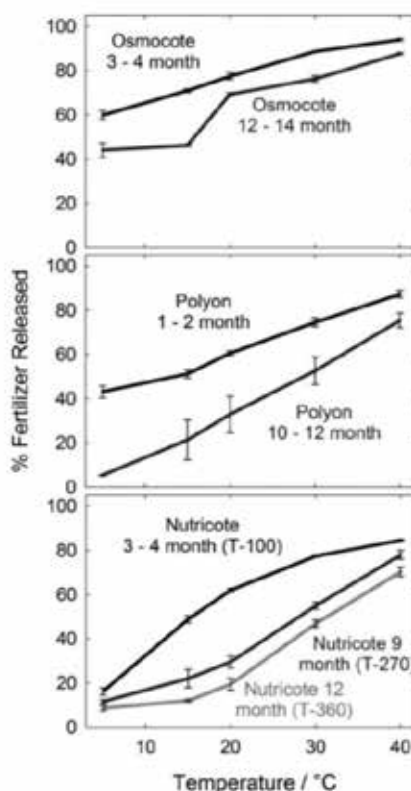


Figure 8: The percent of nutrient salts expended, based on change in mass, from Osmocote, Nutricote, and Polyon fertilizers incubated in water from 5°C to 40°C for 105 d (3.5 months). The values of percent polymer coating used in preparation of these graphs are as follows: Nutricote (all release rates)—11%; Polyon 1 to 2 month—7%; Polyon 10 to 12 month—14%; Osmocote 3 to 4 month—10%; and Osmocote 12 to 14 month—15%. Error bars represent standard deviation.



The following graph shows longer term Osmocote products are more erratic in their release of nutrients as time increases past 200 days. Nutricote and Polyon are more consistent. This has significant implications when trying to manage and grow longer term crops > 7mths or >200mm size stock.

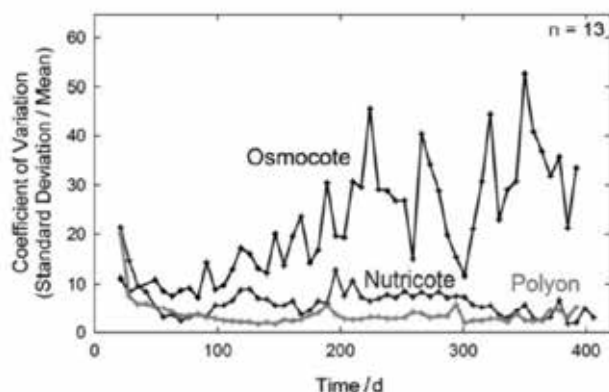


Figure 9: Variation among 13 replicate beakers for the three long-term-release fertilizers based on the water data in Fig. 3. Variability in Polyon was generally less than 5%, and was less than 10% in Nutricote. The trend in variability in Osmocote was erratic, generally increasing over time from about 10% to about 40%.

So my question is, when you choose a CRF with a specific NPK % and apply to plants during a specific time of the year (temperature range/season) is the plant receiving what you intended?

The answer is, you must remember that the solubilities of N, P & K and other nutrients release differently at different temperatures for different products & longevities. You will find growers use a blend of longevities from the same CRF product to improve consistency and maintain more uniform growth rates.

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NextGen

A NextGenner Portrait in Words — Melanie Coggio, Oasis Horticulture

WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK?

I work at Oasis Horticulture in the Marketing department.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED THERE?

I started working with Oasis last spring out in the nursery and moved to the Marketing team at the start of this year.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

I am the Digital Marketing Coordinator.

DESCRIBE WHAT A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK WOULD LOOK LIKE FOR YOU.

During a work day I manage our social media accounts as well as planning and creating new content, managing the creation of artwork for our advertising and labels, collaborating with our influencers, as well as working on internal and corporate marketing projects.

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

My ultimate career goal is to become an Art Director for a branding agency within the greenlife sector. Working for Oasis in the Marketing department has already helped me to broaden my skills outside of visual design. This has helped me to feel more confident in other areas like project/team management, brand strategy, campaign concept development and broadening my plant knowledge. All of

these skills will assist me in my career path.

WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

Improving and growing our brand identity from a design and marketing perspective. Seeing our products featured in consumer's gardens on social media and knowing I am inspiring and educating new gardeners is highly rewarding.

DID YOU STUDY, OR ARE YOU CURRENTLY STUDYING, HORTICULTURE?

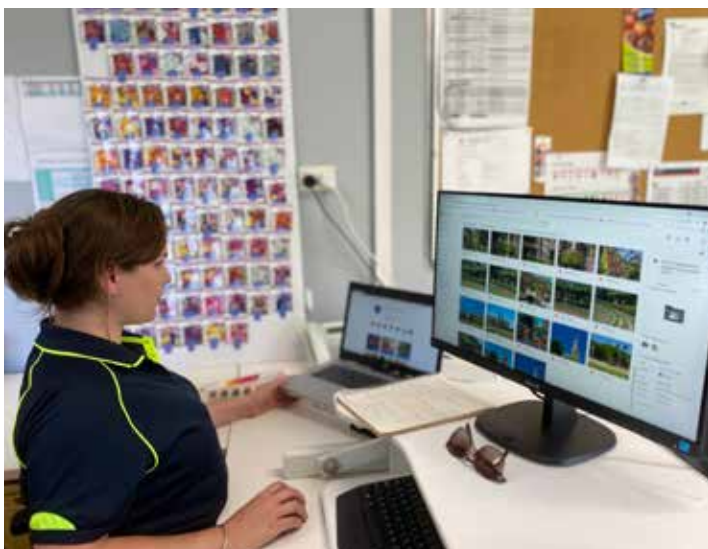
I haven't studied horticulture, however I do have a degree in Visual Communication Design.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?

I had worked for a nursery in the past and grew up with a love for plants and gardening. After working as a designer in the fast-paced publishing industry, starting at Oasis gave me the opportunity to combine two passions.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE/DISLIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THIS INDUSTRY?

I love working with plants and being able to get outdoors and away from my desk. On the other hand, working with plants can be extremely challenging due to their seasonal



Melanie applying her visual communication skills to Oasis branding



Leucospermum Cordifolium



Melanie also enjoys the opportunity to work hands-on with the Oasis product

nature and short shelf life. This means that any campaigns and promotions, require months of planning to ensure the products are at their best for the promotional period.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT A CAREER IN HORTICULTURE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Depending on the role, it can be physically challenging at times. You really need to have a passion for the industry; love working with plants and working outdoors in all the elements.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PLANT/TREE/SHRUB AND WHY?

Almost anything from the Proteaceae family. These prehistoric plants produce such amazing flowers that are so unique and rewarding to grow.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I try to lead a slower lifestyle in my spare time. This includes gardening, going on bush walks/ beach strolls and frequenting cafes and markets.

TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

I love 70s rock'n'roll music and collect vinyl records from the era.



A NextGenner Portrait in Words — Liam Jones, Oasis Horticulture

WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK?

I work for Oasis Horticulture in Springwood.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED THERE?

I have been working there for five years.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

I'm the Indoor & Commercial Pots Coordinator. I lead a small team of dedicated staff to grow a wide range of unique products, which are supplied to retailers and commercial customers.

DESCRIBE WHAT A TYPICAL DAY AT WORK WOULD LOOK LIKE FOR YOU.

I arrive to work around 30 minutes before the rest of my team starts, this allows me to plan out the day and organise the day's top priorities. My day consists of a lot of plant maintenance and problem solving. This is especially true for our commercial baskets and structures. Growing such unique structures is quite a niche skillset.

I am lucky enough to have a good support network from more senior members of staff and leveraging their experiences really allows us to produce great products. People may have seen some of our structures and displays around the city of Sydney.

WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS?

I want to continue to grow in my current role and remain in the horticultural industry. Being able to say that I am a part of a greener future is something I am very passionate about.

WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I like being able to stand back and look at the plants I have grown knowing the effort that has been put into getting them finished to a high standard by my team. It is rewarding knowing these products bring a lot of joy to people in the community and being part of greener urban spaces is something I think we all want to be a part of.



Liam preparing some of the plant materials for greenlife structures

DID YOU STUDY, OR ARE YOU CURRENTLY STUDYING, HORTICULTURE?

I completed my Trade Certificate in wholesale nursery at Richmond TAFE, and I plan on taking some time to focus on my work before starting some more formal training in leadership and management.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?

I started off after high school needing a job but after doing my apprenticeship, I really enjoy my role at Oasis and have loved being a part of the greenlife industry which is growing every day.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE/DISLIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THIS INDUSTRY?

Being a part of a greener future is something that is important to me as an individual. Working in the wind and rain can be quite taxing at time, but knowing I am contributing to a greener future makes this task easier.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT A CAREER IN HORTICULTURE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Come in with an open mind as sometimes plants can be unpredictable no matter how hard you work on them.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PLANT/TREE/SHRUB AND WHY?

Calathea Makoyana. I really like the pattern on the leaves and it's a plant with unique character.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I dabble in the world of crypto-currency trading, which like growing plants can be sometimes unpredictable. I also enjoy staying fit and look forward to getting back into the swing of a post COVID life.

TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

Three years ago, I started snowboarding. I am looking forward to next season when I can get back out on the snow.



Above and below: Some of the unique Oasis basket and structures greening up the city of Sydney



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Green Cargo to Cobargo

Around 1,300 mature native plant species have been delivered to the fire-ravaged Cobargo community, in the south east of the State, thanks to a joint initiative between the Nursery and Garden Industry NSW & ACT (NGINA), Tourism Australia, Cobargo Green Recovery Inc (CGR), South East Local Land Services (LLS), and Department of Primary Industries – Rural Recovery Support Service.

The plants formed the backdrop to a major tourism industry event held at the International Convention Centre in Sydney in early June. Hosted by Tourism Australia, the 2021 Australian Tourism Exchange proved to be one of the last big events held in Sydney before the city went into COVID-19 lockdown.

In a case of serendipitous networking, former NGINA BTSM, Craig Perring was contacted by Tourism Australia representatives who were deliberating over what to do with the huge assortment of natives once the headline event finished. Craig then contacted Megan Wyllie of South East LLS. No one wanted to see the plants end up as landfill.

“I couldn’t turn down such a generous offer and committed that we would find a place to look after the plants and support

finding them new homes in fire-affected communities in order to build new green space in the region,” said Megan.

The spectacular array of hardy natives was transported to the LLS branch in Berry just before Sydney and other regions of NSW went into an extended lockdown. The LLS staff keenly nurtured the plants over winter and throughout the lockdown days.

When restrictions were lifted, an agreement was reached to give 1,300 plants to Cobargo Green Recovery Inc (CGR), a community group formed in the aftermath of the 2019 bushfires that devastated the town and surrounding areas. CGR’s mission is to help revitalise the town through strategic plantings and landscaping that encourage community involvement and put historic Cobargo on the map as a beautiful place to visit on a south coast excursion.

To facilitate the plant exchange, Andrew Britton, Small Landholder Engagement Officer for the LLS, visited Cobargo to meet with CGR co-founders Chris Matthews and Tania Lingard, and Mike Nicholas from the Cobargo Showground Land Manager community group, to deliver some sample plants and review public sites around Cobargo that would benefit from the donated natives.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity for the community to benefit from the generous donation,” said Mr Matthews.

“We’re also so lucky to have Master Couriers offer to deliver the plants to Cobargo, thanks to support funds from the DPI’s Rural Recovery Support Service. It has been a great collaborative effort, especially through the challenges of the COVID-19 climate”.

Several hundred plants have been earmarked for community planting events on public land. The remainder were sold for the minimal sum of \$3 per plant, in a community plant sale in October. The funds raised were shared between the Triangle Tool Library (a library of tools and equipment established after the fires, which provides lending services to the “triangle” of surrounding communities), Cobargo School of Arts Hall, and Cobargo Green Recovery Inc, to fund their community projects.



L to R: Andrew Britton, Small Landholder Engagement Officer for the LLS; Cobargo Green Recovery Inc co-founders Tania Lingard & Chris Matthews; and Mike Nicholas from the Cobargo Showground Land Manager community group, with a sample of plants donated to the community.

Welcome to Our New Members



Business owners: Mathew Plummer and Christina Gnezdiloff

Business name: EvergreenConnect

Address: PO Box 3593 Sunnybank Queensland 4109

Business phone: 0407 212 316

Business email: info@evergreenconnect.com.au

Number of staff: 1 full time, 2 part time to help with the front end and 4 web developers bringing new concepts to fruition

Website: evergreenconnect.com.au

Facebook: /evergreenconnect

CONGRATULATIONS EVERGREENCONNECT, CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH PLANTS FOR 10 YEARS.

2022 marks a decade of operations for EvergreenConnect and what a decade of growth the business has seen. In 2012 the business represented the product of 100 production nurseries predominantly located in Queensland and Northern NSW. Now the platform connects businesses across Australia with over 147,000 items from over 500 production nurseries.

EvergreenConnect started as a greenlife database. A trade-to-trade conduit of information between retail nurseries, designers and landscape contractors and production nurseries designed to provide a comprehensive database listing of currently available plants and full plant lists from production growers across Australia.

Ten years later, the platform retains the comprehensive listing of plants and has evolved into a tool that provides inventory management, online ordering and Ecommerce. Whatever the business type, EvergreenConnect prides itself on being able to offer a variety of solutions to improve business operations.

“Our plant search is user-friendly and enables customers to communicate quickly and easily with whomever they need to. Our database provides up to date information on who’s got it, where it is, and how to get it and customers are able to order from any supplier they choose to.” explained

EvergreenConnect, Director and owner, Mathew Plummer.

“Whilst in a lot of cases these relationships may already exist, it’s what we achieve with our platform - its simplicity to use and the data integration - that provides the mutual benefits.

Our growers benefit from a massive reduction in their administration costs via our automation and we have custom built integration to a large amount of platforms, either complicated ERP systems down to the more common Myob/Xero interfaces. When growers report their payback period from labour savings for their annual subscription is about two weeks we think this is a pretty good outcome.”

Reflecting on a decade of business, Mathew commented that moderate growth was experienced in the first five years but the last four years have been a ‘frenzy’.

“When we commenced operations, we had two goals, and we still hold true to them,” shares Mat.

“The first and most important goal which underpins absolutely everything we do is to make life easier for Nurseries. So whether you operate a production or retail nursery, EvergreenConnect endeavours to have the tools to help you run your business more efficiently. Business size does not come into consideration. We deal with nurseries that have two lines and nurseries that have 2,000.

Our second goal was to grow to provide more than a plant search sales tool. We have developed many features and tools for our customers including a plant image library, designer palettes, and the ability to produce client order forms, both hardcopy and online. This advanced functionality dovetails nicely with our first goal of making nursery operations easier.”

Mat admitted that the last two years have presented challenges to communication and for conducting training with their customer base.

“We make a point of trying to visit all of our production nurseries – in fact we have visited way more of our nurseries than we have not. If we haven’t visited, feel free to challenge us about why we haven’t been onsite.

COVID-19 certainly made that a little more difficult at times but we still spent from Mid-December 2020 to March 2021 in the southern States. We only avoided the NSW lockdown by mere hours in December while transiting through to get to Victoria.”

The team at EvergreenConnect have a diverse suite of business and industry skills.

You could say that Director Mat ‘matured’ in the industry, starting as an apprentice at 17, with experience in growing plugs to in-ground trees and nearly everything in-between.

“I grew up on the family farm in the Northern Territory growing tropical fruit. I used to collect seeds and propagate

trees and sell them for pocket money growing up, so I guess the nursery industry was a natural progression.

Great, is how I would describe this industry. I remember one trip I took through NSW during Winter. I started the day with a cup of tea by the fire with a customer followed by a nursery tour. By the time I left that site it was lunch time. Luckily my next customer appointment was only 10 minutes away. When I arrived there, they made me lunch. So that was pretty much my day done. Could I describe it as a productive day? No, but that's just one illustration of why I love this industry and the people in it.

In ten years, I've probably only had two negative experiences whilst visiting nurseries. Personally, I cannot think of a better industry to be in!"

In addition to Director, another of Mat's business roles is 'translator'. He is intent on providing the critical link between what EvergreenConnect's customers want and what their developers design. His focus is on making sure that what is delivered is truly user friendly, and not a developer's notion of a concept.

Over the years, Mat has added a Diploma in Business Management and a Masters in Business Administration to his horticultural qualifications.

Christina Gnezdiloff, EvergreenConnect's co-owner and Director started in the nursery industry in 2006 armed with a Bachelor of Business in Marketing. Her roles in the industry have focussed on business development. Christina's book of contacts within the key sections of the industry is thick!

In 2012 Christina studied Landscape Architecture and is currently working as a project manager for an environmental landscape construction business, giving her a unique set of skills and understanding of the nursery and associated landscape industries.

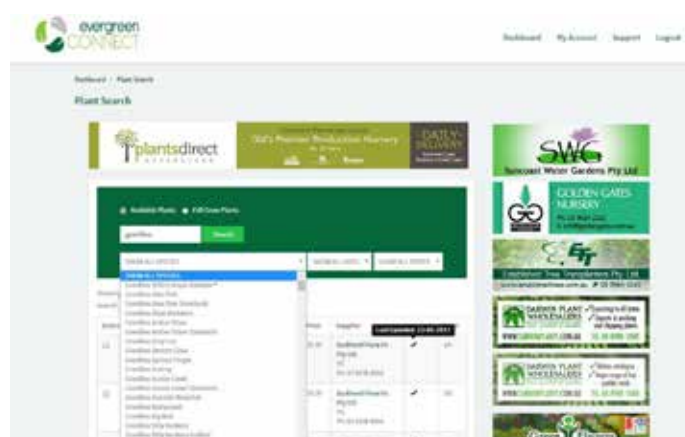
One of the newest members to the team, Todd Gallagher is a landscape architect with a background in landscape construction. Todd's interest in plants flourished as a teenager, when he became a member of the North Queensland Palm and Cycad Association and started growing and selling plants at a local market in Townsville.

After several overseas stints and a number of varied jobs, Todd landed back in Australia and based himself in Brisbane to undertake a Bachelor of Design in Landscape Architecture at QUT. After completing those studies he worked in a professional practice, specialising in residential, commercial and urban designs, with a key focus on sustainable design and ecological function.

In addition to working for EvergreenConnect, Todd is also working as both a research assistant and sessional academic at QUT in the landscape architecture discipline.



Christine Gnezdiloff and Matthew Plummer marking 10 years in the Nursery and Garden Industry



A screenshot of the EvergreenConnect platform



WHAT DOES THE NEXT DECADE HOLD FOR EVERGREENCONNECT?

Mat Plummer says the business will continue to build on its pillars of incorporating additional performance features into the platform and delivering outstanding customer service.

“Put simply we will continue to build good tools and ensure there is plenty of help and support for those that need it.

Our list of solutions continues to grow including additions such as ecommerce and inventory management. I believe our tools work because our staff are from the industry, and understand the way our industry works in reality rather than theoretically.

The EvergreenConnect product is extremely versatile and nobody is locked into a solution. Each part can be unbolted from the rest. We look at each nursery and we ascertain their most pressing needs and that’s what we help them deal with.

Often a nursery will start with just listing their stock. Then over time they will add the next idea and then the next, as they work our solutions through their business.

It’s a key benefit of our software that it allows for the variability between businesses. We bend our software to meet a business’ needs rather than the reverse.

Customer service has always been of utmost importance to the company and this will continue as a priority. We genuinely welcome all the feedback, helpdesk or other enquiries that come through by phone, email, text, etc. You can be assured if you need to communicate with us we will respond.

With most of our new business coming from referral, it indicates that our product and service is meeting the needs of our customers. We love the positive feedback from our

clients and we make sure we share this across our staff. It is just as important that our developers receive the feedback so they are aware that they are writing software that works for the industry.

In fact, we encourage potential new businesses to ask their peers about their thoughts on EvergreenConnect because their feedback is a far stronger case for joining EvergreenConnect than anything we could say.

We’re committed to supporting the green life industry in Australia. We are members of Nursery Industry Associations in three states and we provide assistance to any of our state bodies wherever we can help.

With the continued growth of the business, we have recently added to our development and front office team. A lesson learnt along the way is that we have stopped using phrases such as “we won’t do that” because every year we find ourselves doing things that we promised we’d never do.

Our motto for the years ahead is to keep doing what we’re doing as long as we enjoy doing it. We will keep building on what we do, where-ever the nursery industry takes us. Not everything goes according to script, but it can always be fixed and improved,” Mat surmised.

With a business credos of hard work, flexibility, attention to detail and listening to their customers, it appears that the success of EvergreenConnect is not ephemeral but indeed ever-green.

Congratulations and happy double digits. Best wishes for another decade of growth in connecting business to business in the greenlife industry.

Welcome to Our New Members



Business owners: Mitch Grivins

Business name: Bruinsma Grasstrees

Business phone: 0413 164 596

Business email: sales@grasstrees.net.au

Number of staff: 5

Location: family owned and operated in the Clarence valley area of Northern NSW

Website: bruinsmagrasstrees.com.au

Facebook: /BruinsmaGrasstrees

Instagram: @bruinsmagrasstrees

Role: Owner and Operator of Bruinsma Grasstrees



MY BACKGROUND:

I feel like I grew up transplanting and caring for grass trees. As a young boy, I'd help Mum and Dad in the bush and in the nursery. I've been working in the bush for as long as I can remember. It's been a life passion.

When I was a young boy, I'd do long hours from dawn to dusk when the school holidays and harvesting season collided. And then at 17 when I had my drivers licence, I'd take a ute and trailer and gather a group of my friends after school and we'd head bush with hand spades and pots to transplant grass trees. It was such a bonding time, working hard together in trying conditions.

After year 12, I went to university and studied a Bachelor of Education. When I graduated I taught in Primary schools for seven years. When I decided I didn't want to be in the classroom anymore I took over the running of the business from my Mum, who wanted to pursue other interests and passions.

WHAT WAS YOUR MISSION AT THE OUTSET?

I was handed down a legacy and the reputation of supplying a really high standard and quality of grass trees. I knew I wanted to continue and build on that. My other passion has been to provide a workplace where people enjoy coming to work. I believe it's a privilege to be an employer so I want to serve my employees and help make their lives more enjoyable.



Three generations of the Bruinsma Grasstrees family. L-R: Mitch Grivins, his Mum and Grandfather

SERVICES:

We supply *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* grass trees to wholesale, landscaper and retail clients in NSW, SA, VIC, and QLD. We salvage, supply, deliver, and install.

COMPANY GOALS:

Sustainably supply premium grass trees, and pursue further regeneration and sustainability of grass tree habitats.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS?

The plants themselves are very unique. We also strive to be unique in the level of care and kindness that we show to our clients.

WHY DO YOUR CUSTOMERS SELECT YOU OVER YOUR COMPETITORS?

We find that our customers choose to do business with us because of the reliability of our grass trees. We don't cut corners, and we have a lot of expertise and are happy to share it. Some nurseries and landscapers have been clients for almost 40 years.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR BUSINESS IN THE NEXT YEAR? IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

Slow, steady, and sustainable growth is the goal - a bit like grass trees.

BACKGROUND OF THE BUSINESS

Bruinsma Grasstrees' story began in the 1970s when Bob Bruinsma, my Opa (grandfather), saw an opportunity to salvage and market the stunning *Xanthorrhoea* specimens that were growing prolifically on the very large property he managed.

Bob was an entrepreneur and a lateral thinker. So, despite their reputation at the time as being a nuisance to farmers



Mitch and friends pitching in for the business

and impossible to transplant, Bob started preserving the grass trees from future destruction and carved out a market for them by transplanting them into pots.

In 1982, Bob sold his first trees to some nurseries in Sydney. This is the earliest known date for the commercial sale of grass trees, making Bruinsma Grasstrees the first and longest serving grass tree supplier in the world. 39 years on and the nursery is still family owned and operated.

As the plants grew in commercial popularity, the Commonwealth Government Biodiversity Group wanted to know about our success in transplanting them and asked for our assistance in developing regulations to protect them from over harvesting. The NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage also sought Bruinsma Grasstrees to be advisors on the regulation framework for managing the commercial harvest, salvage, and growing of protected whole plants.

We are continuing to work toward greater awareness and sustainability while being proud that we can help many Australians have a slice of the iconic Aussie bush in their own garden.

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71 Brieses Road
Peats Ridge, NSW 2250



Welcome to Our New Members



Business owners: Pretisha Patel & Kapil Jekishan

Business name: Tree Stripes Pty Ltd

Address: 28/191b McCredie Road, Smithfield NSW 2164

Business phone: 0405 642 083

Business email: info@treestripes.com

Number of staff: 2

Website: treestripes.com

Facebook: /treestripesbrand

Instagram: @treestripesbrand



Pretisha Patel & Kapil Jekishan



TREE STRIPES – A HOME AND LIFESTYLE BRAND EXEMPLIFYING ‘WHAT LOOKS GOOD, SHOULD ALSO DO GOOD’

Pretisha Patel & Kapil Jekishan shared a life-changing experience and an ambitious idea whilst in the middle of the Serengeti Plains, Tanzania, at Tarangire Tree Tops. The renowned lodge, centred around a thousand year-old baobab tree, promotes conservation and minimizing the environmental impact of its operations whilst maximizing community benefit. That ethos pervaded the minds and imagination of Pretisha and Kapil and led to the development of Tree Stripes, a range of authentic, on-trend products that are ethically handcrafted using recycled materials.

“Tarangire Tree Tops is truly in-sync with nature. We were in awe of the majesty of the surroundings and felt like we were merely guests of Mother Nature,” Pretisha explains.

“On the first morning of our stay, we went out from our treehouse accommodation and saw hundreds of zebras grazing right in front of us. We have never been able to forget that image, nor the emotion (still so vivid). Hence the name Tree Stripes and the motivation to create something environmentally and community conscious.

We both grew up in Fiji and the intersection of community, culture and nature played a vital role in everyday life. Both of us were also involved in the tourism sector in Fiji for three plus years, so we had the knowledge of working with established hotel chains and resorts on their interior design needs.

Something happened when we saw those zebras! It crystallised that we were going to create functional and beautiful items from something that has already served its purpose, and we wanted the production process to focus on a sense of community, environment and art.

The result of that experience is our timeless home collections including designer pots, vases, bowls and candle holders. They are all hand made from offcuts from the print and packaging industry, and sealed with natural latex from the rubber tree to make them fully waterproof.

Whilst travelling we stumbled upon a small artisan production partner in Sri Lanka that helped develop our prototypes. And we’re very proud to say that when you purchase from Tree Stripes, you’re improving the lives of over 200 Sri Lankan women and their families and contributing to the provision of fair wages, training, education, and access to community health.

We place equal importance on where and how we source our raw materials to create our collections and work with recycled materials only. Tree Stripes released its first collection in early 2020....about the same time COVID swept the country! Admittedly, not ideal, however we share a



belief with our customers, who can be classed as conscious consumers,” Pretisha affirms.

Both Kapil and Pretisha have educations and sector experiences that enable them to understand and interpret consumer trends. Kapil has a degree in Economics and Finance and over 10 years of experience in financial services where he was responsible for product development, research and sales strategies. Pretisha is qualified with a Bachelor in Business and a Masters in Marketing. Her experience working in the media industry and as an analyst with a research and insights team is invaluable in understanding Tree Stripes’ key market.

“Our customers want a sustainable option whether it is fashion or homewares, and are seeking transparency around how sustainable a brand is. Research is demonstrating that a large majority of consumers want brands and retailers to be more transparent about the origins and sustainability of products. Having a good-looking product is not enough in the retail landscape – which is why the people and materials play a pivotal role in why our brand is chosen”, Kapil explains.

“By promoting sustainable design, we are reducing the environmental impact of our products, from the sourcing of raw materials to their manufacturing, transportation, and designs.

All of our products are made by hand. We’re 100% dependent on the human touch, not machines. From the molds to the motifs on them, it’s our artisans’ hands, their skills and stories that are at the forefront of everything we do. Our goal is to

continue to support the creativity, ingenuity and passion of our artisans while preserving their culture and traditions.

Our key items are made from recycled paper and we reuse all paper leftovers from our main production to create new paper pulp for the next run. This has helped eliminate the need to transport waste material and creates an entirely zero-waste production cycle,” confirms Kapil.

Tree Stripes also thinks outside of the shipping box, for when it comes to cartons received from their production partner, instead of discarding them, these are reused to pack orders. There is no plastic used, only 100% recyclable and reusable packaging. The packaging is also unbranded, so it can be reused, and continue the recycle cycle.

“Our initial distribution strategy was to launch our collection to the South Pacific tourism player but with travel ceasing, our plan had to adapt,” shares Pretisha

“So, we made a pivot and turned our focus to plant shops, garden centres, and lifestyle stores. We learnt that as a start-up that is part of the journey. You have to become comfortable with not knowing everything and that you will always be forced to make a decision without truly understanding the consequences (good or bad).

There was uncertainty about trying to enter a market with a new product made with materials the industry may not have been accustomed to. However the nursery and garden industry was welcoming and receptive to giving a new brand an opportunity.

With lockdown restrictions in place, we picked up the trusty



phone and utilised social media to reach new customers.

We focussed on educating industry retailers through our marketing material, conversations, and videos; and connected with key personnel in the horticulture industry to assist with strengthening our messaging,” outlines Pretisha.

“Plastic is ubiquitous in the nursery and garden industry. We see it with tubs of pots, trays and propagators. There was a time when clay and terracotta were at the forefront,” reflects Kapil.

“We understand plastic is cheap and water-resistant and a convenient option for nurseries however a real opportunity exists in the greenlife industry to offer a solution that doesn’t create more waste, but instead, allows us to create new products using discarded materials through the process of empowerment.

Tree Stripes offers wholesale pricing to nurseries, plant shops and lifestyle stores. We currently produce pots designed to fit standard nursery pots from 100mm up to 180mm and are developing a larger size to incorporate 200mm nursery pots.

As a business, we are keen to understand the different needs across operators within the nursery and garden industry. We want to learn what shapes, sizes and tones work for businesses and suit their end customer’s needs. Over the next 12 months, we will fine-tune our collection to ensure our products are in line with the standard nursery pot sizes and

also that our designs are favoured.

During the next five years, Tree Stripes will expand its product suite to offer complementary interior products and outdoor solutions, all sourced from artisanal focused production partners and made from recycled materials. Within the next decade we aim to expand our distribution across Australasia and the Pacific Islands. Many businesses want to offer sustainable options to their customers or use earth friendly reusable products to create their work of art. Tree Stripes is a business that wants to be part of the solution. We are here to provide this choice,” Kapil states.

“We’re on a mission to empower local artisans, preserve the environment and celebrate handmade imperfection. And whilst it’s definitely too early to claim success, we’re feeling the positivity towards our product and our customers resonate with our why. We’re looking forward to growing and enjoying the journey along the way. We thank our colleagues in the nursery and garden industry for their support and thank you for being a part of this journey with us!” expresses Pretisha.

Both Pretisha and Kapil affirm that Tree Stripes is not just about the interior products and it never has been. They feel privileged to be part of a sustainable social project which helps uplift the living standards of rural women and provide empowerment.

Welcome to Our New Members



Business owners: Lyndl Barrett and Jeff Gardner

Business name: Pelicans Landing Garden Centre

Address: 2A Riverside Drive, Nambucca Heads, NSW 2448

Business phone: 02 6569 4159

Number of staff: 6

Business email: pelicanslandinggc@bigpond.com

Website: gardencentrenambucca.com.au

Facebook: /gardencentrenambucca

Instagram: @pelicanslandinggardencentre

WHEN, WHERE AND HOW DID YOU START IN THE INDUSTRY?

Our initiation into the Nursery industry was somewhat serendipitous.

After 20 months 'on the road' in a 4wd and off-road camper trailer, our journey was brought to a dramatic and expensive halt due to engine failure near Glenn Innes. It became clear that a financial 'top up' was going to be necessary. Many hours searching 'Businesses for Sale' sites led us on an expansive search of the coastal region between South West Rocks and Coffs Harbour.

I had wanted to immerse myself in the wonders of nature in some form for years and an ad for a Garden Centre in Nambucca Heads caught my eye. However, as is common, you stick to what you know and our attention was captured by a café/restaurant premises in Bellingen. Nearly seven years earlier I had setup a Café in Perth WA, where I met Jeff who owned a food distribution business. Thus the 'sticking to what you know'.

What proved to be a fortuitous business meeting cancellation between Jeff and I, and the owners of the Bellingen café, enabled us to take a drive to the coast. We found ourselves driving along the Nambucca River where we noticed the nursery we'd spotted in our online search.

Curiosity drew us into the premises and Jeff says he saw 'a light in my eye'. He knew my passion for all things greenlife and that I was reluctant to immerse myself in the high-pressure food industry again. With Jeff's encouragement, we placed an offer that day, made our apologies to the Bellingen Café owners, moved ourselves to the Foreshore Caravan Park on the Nambucca River and our journey into the nursery industry began.

On September 23, 2010 we became the owners of the nursery in Nambucca Heads. We named it Pelicans Landing Garden Centre as one of the highlights of our 20 month journey had been paddling in our two person canoe and regardless of how remote or obscure the water course, even far eastern WA desert gorges, there were always pelicans! As we parked on the Nambucca River that day, a pod of pelicans splashed down on the river; the name for our garden centre was decided.

WHAT WAS YOUR MISSION AT THE OUTSET?

Our aim was to create a wholesome, harmonious environment to service the community with greenlife. Our motto is the enrich, nurture enhance and inspire and provide giftware to delight.

We immersed ourselves in revamping the nursery in its entirety. With the assistance of a skilled friend, local tradesmen and an enthusiastic gentlemen who popped by to offer to help simply because he was inspired by what we were





Lyndl Barrett and Jeff Gardner



doing! We built enclosed areas for allied storage, giftware/décor areas, wind proofed fences, added skylights, installed commercial nursery shelving, new counters and office area... all whilst maintaining customer service!

By February 2011 we felt more confident and satisfied with the outcome of our efforts. Then the hail hit! A 10 minute flash storm created havoc. We were somewhat dismayed and overwhelmed to say the least, though rallied and moved forward.

WHAT'S YOUR BACKGROUND, E.G., EDUCATION, WORK EXPERIENCE, ETC?

Jeff and I both had well established business acumen from years of operating small businesses individually. This enabled us to create a business model to strive for. Jeff's 'jack of all trades' skills and innate ability with sales, information retention, stock management, accounting programs, product research and affable nature proved invaluable.

My passion for greenlife has led me into exploring permaculture, organic gardening, herb lore, companion planting and all their inherent concerns and benefits to sustaining nature's and our health. This green passion coupled with my organizational skills proved a valuable asset in maximizing the use of the very limited area we had available to create a harmonious functional environment.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE/DISLIKE THE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY?

At the outset we excitedly rang a friend to reveal our purchase of a Garden Centre. Their response was... 'What were you thinking?' A little more colourfully actually. We were somewhat mystified at the response though it didn't take long to figure out what they meant. We soon realized that all

'the lives' to look after requiring constant nurturing created a somewhat ball and chain effect.

We are so grateful for the innate 'community spirit' of the nursery Industry. The generous sharing of knowledge and advice from a diverse range of Industry professionals from greenlife wholesalers, Allied, Giftware and pot distributors has enabled us to continue to evolve and finesse our service.

The continued support of all these wonderful professionals and their fabulous quality products and services have been fundamental to our growth and success. It's the passion of the wholesalers and all the associated industry products, services and support that enable retailers like us to exist and ultimately flourish. We admire and applaud you all!

DOES YOUR COMPANY HELP THE COMMUNITY WHERE IT IS LOCATED?

Nambucca Heads is beautiful. We're also blessed with our garden centre location immediately across the road from the pelican populated Nambucca River and Lions Park. We're constantly delighted by the diverse array of wildlife neighboring us.

We gradually developed solid relationships throughout the community. We have serviced and supported local businesses, schools and garden clubs in an myriad of ways and have received their support in return.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU'VE FACED?

There's certainly been challenges along the way...

My plant knowledge proved invaluable though entering into the world of Latin names was challenging! Thank goodness for my library of plant books. Google wasn't as accessible then...at least not to me. Thankfully wholesalers began



adding common plant names to their lists which lightened the load.

The small town demographic being less affluent was a considerable challenge. This caused us to restrict our stock choices initially. It also slowed the development of our business plan. This has changed over the years and we have been able to broaden our range to accommodate more 'high end' products in garden décor and plants alike.

Website development has persisted in challenging me. My sister initiated a simple site that was intended to evolve. Alas my inability to manifest suitable content and computer skills from 1995 stymied further progress. I've made numerous attempts to engage a professional to update our site though I inevitably become burdened by the need to create content. So that challenge remains.

My outdated IT skills restricted me from Social media involvement. The constant challenge of maintaining day to day hands on operations left me 'time poor' and earth bound. I made the attempt to initiate a social media presence, with a modicum of success. I was fortunate to connect with a customer who offered assistance and extensive knowledge to ensure a consistent more professional presence. It has certainly impacted and broadened our client base. Though I'm back to managing it again now with a little more confidence, updating IT skills is a must.

Staff can certainly be the bane of small business ownership. We now have up to five staff, though this waxes and wanes. Accessibility to qualified staff has always proven challenging in our small town environs. Though we now have a solid team with a mixture of qualified staff and hands on workers we find our presence is still mostly required.

Thus it's been 11 years with a predominance of seven days a week. Inevitably a familiar story for many small business owners.

TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS?

We've adhered to the philosophy of quality, abundance and affordability. This has grown a loyal customer base, whose

'word of mouth' promotion has ensured the business has expanded.

The 'opportunity disguised as loss' effect of the pandemic has solidified our presence and extended awareness of our business to the point that we've taken on a neighbouring storage facility to cope with the constant supply of stock of all descriptions. We're so impressed with and grateful for the Industry's initiative to secure us all as an essential service.

WHAT DO YOU FIND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY?

We are delighted by the eco system we've created and all the critters we share it with. We've shared much laughter and developed fabulous enduring relationships with customers and industry professionals alike.

We are enamored by the environment and community we live in and are so grateful for the 'bullets we've dodged', avoiding the worst of the drought, fires, flood, horrendous hail and even the pandemic.

As far as lifestyle choices go, working in the nursery industry is a fabulous choice, regardless of the sometimes excessive demands, the pros far outweigh the cons.

It's astounding to us that 11 years has passed. Our initial three-year plan quickly turned into five years and here we are beyond a decade. Overall it's been a joyous ride though utterly all consuming...we're definitely here to stay.

TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOU AND/OR YOUR BUSINESS, ANYTHING AT ALL.

We regularly hear giggles or squeals from customers as they encounter one of the family of water dragons whose home we share.

It's also rewarding to view customer's reactions when entering our premises. It's often been referred to 'as like entering a Tardis', as externally the size is deceiving compared to what's inside.



Spect*i*cle®

Introducing a new, innovative, labour saving, weed management tool for ornamental production nurseries

- // Weed control in ornamental production nurseries is becoming increasingly problematic due to the occurrence of difficult to control weeds, such as fleabane, as well as weed resistance to common herbicides and the high labour cost associated with frequent herbicide applications and hand weeding. Therefore, new weed control methods are required to allow the development of sustainable weed management programs that help break the cycle of difficult to control weeds across all areas of the nursery.
- // Specticle is an innovative herbicide that sets a new standard for pre-emergent weed control in bareground areas of ornamental production nurseries.
- // Specticle is labelled for use in maintaining bareground in outdoor production areas (e.g. underneath and around ornamental potted plants and benches) in access areas like driveways, walkways, and around infrastructure such as buildings and fencelines.
- // When applied prior to weed seed germination, Specticle prevents establishment of a range of grass and broadleaf weeds for up to 8 months.
- // Specticle provides long-lasting control against both grass and broadleaf weeds and can greatly assist nursery managers reduce labour and lower costs associated with weed control in the nursery.
- // Specticle effectively and efficiently controls weeds in the bareground areas of the nursery, reducing the risk of weed seeds contaminating potted plants. Specticle offers significant advantages compared to current industry practices which require multiple applications of knockdown herbicides or shorter lived pre-emergent herbicides.
- // Specticle has been trialled in nursery situations in Australia with excellent long-term weed control achieved in a number of different settings, validating the strong value that Specticle can provide for ornamental nursery managers.
- // Specticle offers an alternative mode of action versus many current post and pre-emergent herbicides, helping to break the cycle of weeds and manage weed resistance to herbicides.

Untreated



Specticle Treated



Innovative Weed Management Tool For Ornamental Production Nurseries

Testimonials on using Specticle

Plants Direct Queensland

– Beau Hartshorn, Nursery Operations Manager

“We have natural bushland and farmland neighbouring the nursery, so seed can come onto the site from wind, rain and run off. At the present time, fleabane is a problem. General herbicides haven't been knocking that. Probably once or twice a month we would go through and spray with general herbicides, such as glyphosate. It's pretty well a full time job, 4 days per week, making herbicide application via knapsacks or tractor. Specticle will help us cut down on labour, cut down on costs, so it is a great investment.”

Greenstock Nurseries

– Mark Handy, Research Development Manager

“We use a knockdown every 2 to 3 months and it takes about 3 weeks to cover the property. We sprayed Specticle in late June. We applied Slasher® for knockdown and 1 week later sprayed Specticle. We reviewed in September and the site was completely clean of weeds. We had another review in January and again the Specticle plots were completely clean of weeds. Having a product that lasts even longer will benefit us so much. It will also save time to do one application of Specticle, mixed with other knockdown products, saving time for me by allowing me to spray in one application.”

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