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### **January**

Wednesday 20 | AgChem | Brisbane
Friday 29 | Chemcert AQF111 | Central Coast

### **February**

Wednesday 10 | ChemcertAQF111 | Kenthurst Thursday 25 | First Aid | Kenthurst

### **April**

Thursday 8 | Manual Handling | Kenthurst

Thursday 15 | First Aid | Erina

**Thursday 22** | Cyber Security & Using the Cloud (In-house workshop and webinar) | Sydney

Wednesday 28 | ChemCert | Mudgee

Thursday 29 | ChemCert | Kenthurst

### May

Tuesday 4 | First Aid | Port Macquarie

Thursday 6 | Manual Handling | Port Macquarie

Friday 7 | Manual Handling | Wollongbar

**Thursday 13** | Digital Marketing & Social Media Workshop | Sydney

### June

**Thursday 3** | First Aid | Kenthurst **Wednesday 23** | AgChem | Brisbane

### **August**

Thursday 26 | ChemCert | Kenthurst

### September

Thursday 23 | First Aid | Kenthurst

### November

Thursday 25 | ChemCert | Kenthurst





# **President's Report**

by Malcolm Calder, President, NGINA

Last month I attended NGINA's March Board meeting, which was held in the Northern Rivers region. Over a two-day period, the Directors and I also had the pleasure of attending the Northern Rivers Trade Day and visiting some key nurseries in the area. I would like to thank NGINA Director Sam Birkwood and Northern Rivers Group Chair, Lynne Sutherland, for organising the event and hosting us. Extremely well done.

As I write this the end of the first quarter is fast approaching and it's pleasing to hear that results, from various discussions and visits across the country, indicate the horticulture industry is still seeing sustained production numbers. Retail sales are still robust. However, I believe that across the country our sector will see a slight slowing down during the next quarter, with a predicted levelling out of production numbers after an unusually high 12 months. The wisdom through this is a continued steady management of business and staff, factoring in the still-strong interest in greenlife and the different industry sectors. The settling of both retail and production numbers will reflect a strong and sustained lift up from pre-COVID results.

NGINA is providing tangible help and benefits to you in line with our working strategic plan and many would have seen this apply to their businesses in recent months. I am pleased with the progress and continue to speak highly of the office staff and the Board, both of whom are working well together.

As many of you know I am very passionate to see young people succeeding in our industry, so it was a privilege to attend the recent NextGen event held at Honeysuckle Park in Dural, NSW. A fantastic night and very well organised. Our industry is facing a crisis with the lack of qualified and experienced nursery people. With the industry lifting, this need becomes even more critical. NGINA has a focus to reach out to career advisers, schools and forums to encourage a career choice in horticulture. In addition to this, over 30 schools are already engaged with NGINA through the Centre of Excellence in Agricultural Education with a vertical

garden competition. The future is certainly bright!

As I talk with key national leaders in our industry, I see the essential need for solid and honest communication and respectful collaboration. There has never been such a season of opportunity to promote to Australia the incredible cause of greening the nation with increased interest and engagement. To achieve this effectively we must continue to open our lines of communication. There is a quote:

#### Every act of communication is a miracle of translation.

We might all be so different in personality and role, even in what we feel is important, however, we do have common goals within our industry that we must accomplish.

I am encouraged to see all five state NGIs banding together with each other and with Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) through biweekly team meetings, more sharing of information and resources, and more strategic discussion on how to be more effective, both for members and the industry. This is essential for healthy progress.

Above all, however, we need to hear from you, our valued members, so we can both respond to your needs and requests, and hear your thoughts and ideas for our industry as we build now and for the future.

I encourage you to attend our monthly Online Members' Forum, which is a new opportunity for communication and connection. Keep an eye out for communications on this coming from NGINA HQ.

Finally, the NGINA Board, CEO and staff are incredibly committed to our members and our industry, and to promoting the greenlife opportunity to a wider audience.

I look forward to a continued prosperous 2021 as our lives return to more stable interactive conditions.



# **CEO's Report**

by Anita Campbell, CEO, NGINA

One of the most important roles of a CEO and their senior leadership team is to develop and successfully execute their company's strategic plan: a road map, approved by the Board, to take a company from where it currently sits to where the Board wants it to go over a multi-year period.

As you know we launched the 'NGINA Strategic Plan 2020–2023' at last year's AGM in November. The plan has four main pillars: membership services, professional development, advocacy and association sustainability. I am proud to report on our progress.

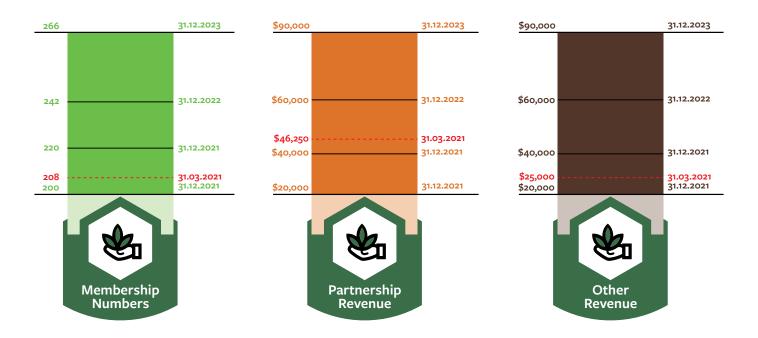
#### **MEMBERSHIP SERVICES**

On Wednesday 24 February we launched our first Online Members' Forum. These forums, which will continue monthly, are a vital way for us to connect with all our members, regardless of geography, and an important vehicle to disseminate key industry information. I would like to encourage all members to take an hour on the fourth Wednesday of each month and join us.

At our second forum on Wednesday 24 March we launched our new HR Services. We all know that having up-to-date, relevant and compliant policies and procedures in your workplace is critical—without them your business could be exposed.

Members are conscious of this and, I believe, want to do the right thing. When we analysed the results of our membership engagement survey we found that over half of the respondents said that HR advice/IR services is one of the most important services that we should be offering to our members.

We listened! I'm pleased to announce that, thanks to our partners at Business Australia, we can offer members the opportunity to conduct an audit of their IR policies and procedures. This is designed to clearly identify any risk exposure that your business could face. Following that, members will have the opportunity to purchase legally compliant documents for their businesses at a significantly



subsidised rate. The library contains over 200 policies, contracts and checklists, all written and maintained by the Workplace Relations team at Australian Business Lawyers & Advisors (ABLA).

We also had a hugely successful Growers & Suppliers Group event at Grange Growing Solutions in Ebenezer, NSW, on Thursday 25 February and a sold out (free) Central Coast/ Hunter Group event at Lowes Tissue Culture in Tumbi Umbi, NSW, on Thursday 4 March. The NGINA Board attended a Northern Rivers Group event and their Trade Day the week of the 8 March and, of course, we had our first NextGen event on Thursday 18 March. Sydney Trade Day has also had a few excellent months with more exhibitors and buyers coming through the gate.

We have run full first aid and ChemCert classes in Sydney with classes in the Central Coast coming up shortly. Manual handling and cyber security courses are starting this month (April) and we are rolling out courses in Port Macquarie, Mudgee and the Northern Rivers over the coming months. Our training calendar is on page 4 but also keep an eye on our website (bit.ly/3cP4m8I) as this area of our site is updated regularly.

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

With less than 15% of the nursery and garden industry workforce being under the age of 40, it is imperative for the very future of our industry that we attract more young people to the industry, and that we support, encourage

and offer good career paths to all those already here. We have established and held the first meeting of our Training & Professional Development Committee. Our 'Introduction to Basic Horticulture' workshops have, so far, been taught at five Sydney schools with another 15 asking for a session in term two. Thirty schools are also taking part in our vertical garden competition. As mentioned earlier, our first NextGen event in over eight years was held last month at Honeysuckle Park in Dural, NSW. It was fantastic to meet so many of the next generation of nursery supervisors and business owners. More information and photos from the event can be found on page 16.

#### **ADVOCACY**

Together, with our partners at Hort Innovation, we successfully lobbied to have the AgSkilled Program extended to production nurseries. AgSkilled is a \$15 million NSW government-funded industry-led workforce development strategy. We will be working with various training providers to promote eligible courses to our members.

#### **ASSOCIATION SUSTAINABILITY**

We have eight more members since the end of 2020 and are well on track to achieve a target of 220 by the end of the year. We have already achieved over \$46,000 in partnership this year, which smashes our target of \$40,000 by the end of 2021. So far this year we have made \$25,000 in alternative revenue, which puts us well on track to make the required \$40,000 by the end of the year.



# Thank you to NGINA partners for their continued support.

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# BTSM's Report

by Craig Perring, Business & Technical Support Manager, NGINA

#### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The NGINA Board has approved my business development plan, which is strongly aligned with the 'NGINA Strategic Plan 2021–2023'. It contains ambitious membership and partnership acquisition targets, as well as an expansion of our alternative revenue streams. I have developed a travel plan for the year that gets me out to all our members and a significant number of non members.

Please reach out to NGINA if you need to see me sooner rather than later, if you need help or have specific questions. Often when visiting nurseries, I hear retrospectively of issues that could have been resolved in a timelier manner with help from the office. Whether you're a retail or production nursery, or an allied trader, we can schedule a site visit, provide help over the phone or put you in contact with resources to help address any issues.

Up to 22 March, I have already visited 31 (15%) of our 208 members this year, as well as a further 13 prospective nurseries to encourage membership. While my main focus is always on members and meeting your needs, there is always a place to actively seek and encourage other nurseries to support NGINA, which is paramount to the success of the Association's future.

The plan also has a focus on attracting new partners/ sponsors of NGINA to ensure that the Association is more financially sustainable and allows us to fulfil more member benefits, such as training, networking events, Trade Day, etc.

I will be visiting all members as soon as possible and encourage those that require assistance or technical advice to contact me for an appointment.

#### **WATER**

The office of Melinda Pavey, Minister for Water, Property and Housing, has contacted NGINA to follow up on water restrictions discussions that NGINA held with them last year. They have requested that NGINA is included in the consultation process of "streamlining" more uniform water

restrictions across the state. We are also taking part in Sydney Water's annual Stakeholder Perceptions Survey, which will gather feedback about how they are performing and identify areas where they can improve when working with key stakeholders, such as the nursery sector.

We subsequently met with Melanie Werner, Head of Customer Programs at Sydney Water, and discussed how to further enhance our working relationships with the Minister, Sydney Water and other water authorities in general.

NGINA is well aware of the significant impact water use and water policy have on our industry, particularly through drought. With the best part of the state currently under water we will continue to hold discussions so that when the next drought hits, we'll have clear and meaningful procedures in place for working with nurseries and the general public around water restrictions.

We look forward to reporting back on developments.

#### **HORT INNOVATION**

NGINA met with Hort Innovation's Regional Extension Manager, Adrian Englefield, to provide feedback around the Hort Innovation Strategic Investment Plan and to help determine what areas of investment need to be considered over the next five years. Adrian met with many growers face to face, both at nurseries and at Trade Day, so he could collate feedback. I encourage all members to contact Adrian to provide feedback, if you have not done so already. He can be contacted on 0427 143 709 or via email at adrian.englefield@horticulture.com.au.

#### STATE AND REGIONAL WEED COMMITTEES

I am active member of the Hunter Region Weed Committee, the Greater Sydney Weed Committee and State Weed Committee. I also liaise with other LLS regions to work with them on a number of campaigns around biosecurity.

Together with Greater Sydney Local Land Services, National Parks and Wildlife and Blue Mountains City Council, I have

been asked to work with a small working group of weed experts to review the Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan (GSRSWMP).

The opportunity to represent the nursery sector in the biosecurity space is invaluable as it provides the industry with advocacy opportunities and allows us to work with lead agencies, such as LLS, DPI and councils, at a high level.

Additionally, Plant Sure has been presented to all of these state and regional committees and they, together with the weed community as a whole, are actively supportive of the program. NGINA and Plant Sure's independent Project Lead, Aimee Freimanis, are currently exploring funding

opportunities to work with some of these key stakeholders.

I continue to encourage members to actively participate in this program. It will be a great long-term benefit to our members and our industry, and we need growers to step up.

For more information on how you can become involved in the program, please contact me or Aimee (0488 080 120/aimee@ecohort.com)

Contact Craig Perring on **0404 407 262** or email craig.perring@ngina.com.au.

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#### **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.

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

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# **Ozbreed Easy Access** Ozbreed's New No-Fuss Offering

Ozbreed has been breeding no-fuss, functional and reliable plants for landscape professionals since 2002. For almost 20 years, their plants have graced roadsides, commercial and residential landscapes, and gardens in every state, all over mainland Australia.

Todd Layt and his family have been synonymous with the Ozbreed enterprise, whose humble beginnings started in turf breeding in 1995. The success of a decision by Todd to breed Lomandra cultivars in the early days of the business, has grown into what it is today. Ozbreed is now represented by licenced propagators and growers in Australia, New Zealand, the US, Europe and Japan, supplying each country's landscape industry with a wide variety of greenlife species.

In 2021, while Todd remains at the forefront of the breeding and research arm of the business, the day-to-day running of the company is undergoing some radical changes. Whereas, in the past Ozbreed was perceived as a 'closed book', with access to their signature plants and growing options limited—things are changing. Industry feedback has been building and Ozbreed is listening. They are paying attention to propagators and growers who want Ozbreed to make access to their plants easier, less bureaucratic and red-tape free.

After almost 20 years, Ozbreed is changing their policy.

#### **OZBREED EASY ACCESS OFFERING**

From 1 July this year, Ozbreed is launching a new offering called Ozbreed Easy Access (OEA)—this means that it will be easier for any OEA-approved nursery to access and to grow Ozbreed's reliable, no-fuss plants from propagation material supplied by selected specialist propagators and growers. By removing the barriers to accessing propagation stocks, the new OEA offering will increase the availability of Ozbreed plants to the market.

Ozbreed will maintain their current business relationships with trusted licenced propagators and growers. The OEA opportunity will be available to nurseries who meet the new OEA criteria. (For more information on the OEA criteria go to ozbreed.com.au.)

#### **OZBREED/NGINA PARTNERSHIP**

This year Ozbreed is partnering with NGINA, in a cooperative relationship with an aim to grow, innovate and develop the industry. It sees NGINA as the horticulture industry representative. The leader in championing the needs of their members in the states of NSW and ACT. NGINA's legacy and its motivation to build on that into the future, mirrors the ambitions at Ozbreed.

Ozbreed wants to support the established industry that helped build it and to push into supporting the grassroots of and new recruits to the industry. Working with NGINA to consolidate how that looks through mentorship, sponsorship and apprenticeships has already begun. The industry is only as strong as the foundation it is built on and Ozbreed wants to support young and passionate horticulturists to strengthen the industry's future.

#### **OZBREED METHODOLOGY**

At the forefront of the shared NGINA-Ozbreed partnership and future is communication, cohesion and structured end goals. The NGINA model, of engaging with its members and building on the Association's current strengths, is mirrored by Ozbreed.

Where previously the Layt family used to run every aspect of the company, some family members are taking a step back from the coalface. Nathan Layt will continue to sit as a Director on the Management Committee. Todd, while remaining a Director, is now focusing on plant breeding and has assembled a team of industry professionals to manage and run the day-to-day aspects of the business.

Michael Rigg is leading the new team in the role of General Manager. His new team accompanies the new management style and fresh ways of doing things at Ozbreed. Nick Infield continues in his role as Nursery Manager, alongside James Maitland in the recently created role of Distribution & Relationship Manager.

Ozbreed is reinvigorated with new marketing and communication expertise on board. Ally Jackson's role of Communications & Business Relations focuses on personal communication with influencers and businesses at the forefront of the landscaping industry. On top of that, they are embracing the digital age and building on their marketing presence through technological platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, under the guidance of Marketing Assistant Bianca Boman.

#### **HISTORICALLY**

From its inception, Ozbreed focused on breeding plants that were tough enough to withstand the climatic extremes of drought and flood, that were low maintenance and reliable in their horticultural uniformity and performance. Ozbreed revolutionised the landscaping industry with natives that behaved the way they claimed they would, thanks to selective breeding and consistent trialling and testing of products in the development phase, through to their uniform propagation. Still today, new plants are only released to market when they successfully pass all vigorous controls, over several seasons.



Caitlin Desmond, a second-year apprentice at Ozbreed



Staff inspecting trial plants at Ozbreed's testing site





Little Jess™ Dianella

Potting up tubestock

Over the last two decades, Ozbreed plants have become landscape design darlings, featuring in high-profile landscapes all over the country. What started with signature Lomandras has led to a constant evolution in the plants that Todd has bred. As the business evolved, Ozbreed also became a representative for other national and international breeders needing a platform to distribute their carefully bred plants to growers and propagators alike.

Regular contact with professionals in the landscaping industry has been at the core of new product development and acquisition, and continues to be today. The plants they required or were at a loss to find, Todd has always sought to breed or represent. Tanika® Lomandra longifolia 'LM300' (1) is a mainstream plant, instantly recognised by landscape professionals and home gardeners, after 15 years of being specified in landscape design across the country. Luscious® Tristaniopsis laurina 'DOW10' (D makes the plant list for exclusive residential gardens, as well as council parks and streetscapes on a regular basis.

#### SAMPLE PROGRAM AND NEW PLANT **DEVELOPMENT**

These two previously successful programs are being reinvigorated and recharged, so that newer and yet-tobe released trial plants can be tested in environments outside of Ozbreed's climatic range at their Richmond base. Industry influencers and landscape professionals are regularly being sourced to participate. Both programs give them the chance to get up close to Ozbreed plants, get their hands dirty planting them, and then engage them with the observation of those plants in their particular climate. Feedback is collected and recorded to add to Ozbreed's data and understanding of the resilience—or not—of the selected plants. Describing the process, Todd said, "Discarding beautiful plants that do not perform in landscape testing is always the hardest part as a breeder, but testing and not guessing is part of our culture."

#### **WATCH THIS SPACE**

Breeding and selecting plants has never slowed down in the Ozbreed nursery, and the results of that focus will be revealed in the upcoming months and years. Plants that have been requested by industry will become available to approved OEA nurseries to buy, pot on and sell to a market that just continues to go from strength to strength. As long as there is demand for exciting new plants and reliable performers, Ozbreed will continue to breed them and OEAapproved nurseries will have 'easy access' to growing them.



Tanika® Lomandra



Aussie Rambler™ Carpobrotus



# **Challenges Within the Growing Media Supply Chain**



by Ben Grange, National Sales & Marketing Manager, Grange Growing Solutions

In the past two years our industry has seen a massive fluctuation in demand for greenlife and growing media from the ornamental horticultural industry. Since we are positioned as a supplier to both commercial growers and retailers, this allows insight into how various market sectors are performing.

In the 2019 fiscal year, the landscape sector appeared to be experiencing very strong sales into civil projects and other large infrastructure projects that had been in the planning for some time. However, growers predominantly supplying to retail garden centres and big-box chains had a poor 2019 fiscal year.

Early in the 2020 fiscal year, things were a little better but deteriorated heading into Christmas and up to February as confidence in growers was waning with bushfires, drought and water restrictions all impacting consumer spending. February, however, brought rain and a renewed hope. At that point many propagating nurseries had already wound back with a lack of forward orders. Most growers were wary and unsure about how much to plant for the following spring,

and talks of the pandemic were creating uncertainty. By late March/early April, we were in lockdown due to COVID, which drastically changed the consumer sector of the ornamental industry. Demand outstripped supply, growers and potting media producers have been put to task.

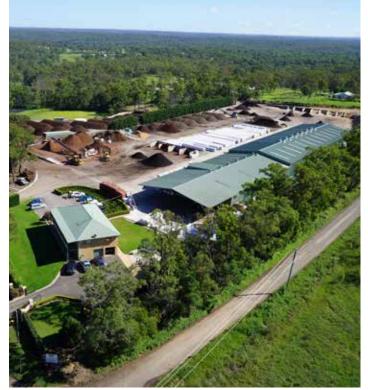
How this has affected potting mix manufacturers has been largely influenced by the materials they use.

In container production nurseries, growing media is comprised of the following components, being either mineral or organic in nature:

- Composted pine bark products
- Composted hardwood residues from forestry and milling
- Aged and processed softwood residues from forestry and milling
- Imported peat products from Europe and North America
- Domestic peat
- Coir products, mainly pith and chip from predominantly Asia (Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka)



A trommel screen at Go Grow



Aerial shot of Grange Growing Solutions

- Limited amounts of greenwaste derived compost
- Mineral components, including numerous sand additives derived from mining and dredging, with various particle sizes
- Coal clinker ash
- Perlite
- Vermiculite
- Zeolite
- Basaltic dusts

There are numerous factors influencing the supply and price of each and every one of these groups of materials. Many are derivatives or by-products from other industries and often it is beyond the growing media manufacturers' control when another industry finds value in these products. This, in turn, drives costs upwards.



Loading a Go Grow truck



Aerial shot of Australian Growing Solutions (AGS)



AGS trucks

Domestic factors may influence a reduction in material supply, especially the growing trend for the elimination of coal and its replacement with sustainable alternatives, such as forestry residues. These are regarded as good alternatives for energy supply to the milling industry and result in burning for cogeneration and reducing load on the grid. Plus, in recent times, the domestic production of laminate board and MDF absorbs many thousands of tonnes of pine softwood into the production of their product, which means that the price of these residues has increased significantly.

Plantation fires in 2019 and 2020 saw in excess of 70 million trees eliminated from forests. If and when replaced, it will take around 18 to 20 years to reach harvest. Much of the timber burnt was harvested last year within the limited time available. This is because the timber deteriorates and, for the construction industry, is no longer useable after six months. This meant that the sawmills created reasonable stocks of their end product, however, now that the mass harvesting has taken place the industry is experiencing a reduction in logs being harvested. Consequently, pine bark and sawdust in NSW is in short supply and future adequate supply is questionable.

Further to the challenges of the fires, followed by COVID, the industry was faced with China staging a trade war, which impacted all imported material. Shipping went up around four to five times the cost overnight! Compounding import problems, Australia had local strikes at its shipping ports and as a result the shipping lines would not enter the country for a period of time.

Currently, empty containers are in short supply, so even if you succeed in booking space on a ship the next challenge is finding an available container. Domestic coconut fibre supply is almost exhausted, and growing media companies are



Aerial shot of the Go Grow site

substituting this with peat or compost fines as a short-term remedy to maintain growing media supply.

All of the factors mentioned have financial and logistical impacts that are beyond the control of growing media suppliers. Despite long-term relationships with suppliers and constant communication with them, best efforts are made to ensure customers are not let down. The situation may

change, though presently the picture is a little ominous with an increase in demand by around 30% and a decrease in available resources.

If anyone would like to discuss the above in further detail then please do not hesitate to give me a call or email ben@growingsolutions.com.au and I will be happy to explain the current lay of the land.



NGINA caught up with Adrian McCarthy, Commercial **Business Manager** at Australian Growing Solutions (AGS) in Tyabb, Victoria, to ask him a few questions around last year's bushfires and the impact they had on AGS and the growing media supply chain.

#### HOW ARE YOU SEEING THE MARKET AND **CUSTOMER DEMAND?**

From a wholesale point of view, demand has been extremely high since August and has only just begun to flatten a little.

#### **HOW HAS AGS RESPONDED?**

AGS has been working with its suppliers in the forestry industry to ensure it has sufficient supply for its customers. We've enacted a contingency plan, supplementing a percentage of our growing media for our Sydney operation out of Victoria. We've also been working with our customer base on the use of alternative products, such as GrowFibre.

#### DID THE FIRES IN NSW LAST YEAR IMPACT ON YOUR SUPPLY?

With the fires wiping out around 40% of the NSW forest, AGS has been heavily impacted in the NSW operation, with around a 50% reduction in the availability of pine bark. This product is required for the manufacture of pine bark compost that supplies our NSW nursery industry customer base. This situation is set to remain until logging returns to reasonable levels in 2024. The incremental cost to supply in NSW has significantly increased due to AGS having to supplement ingredients out of Victoria.



Bruce Beesley, Managing Director of Go Grow in Ballina, NSW, shared his thoughts on the recent challenges facing the growing media industry, touching on both the bushfires and COVID.

#### FROM THE NORTH OF THE STATE

The growing media industry has met with plenty of challenges over the past 18 months with bushfires causing a major shortage of pine bark, which has been the mainstay of potting mix substrates for many years. Despite this the market has seen excellent growth in growing media supply in both wholesale and retail markets.

COVID had a mixed effect on business—while initially there was a downturn, it soon turned around, particularly for the nursery industry. The main problem has been in the supply of products sourced from overseas, such as coir from India and Sri Lanka. This has also affected a lot of substrates sourced from Europe, such as peat moss. The additional freight costs charged by shipping lines to get products such as coir has had an overall effect on cost of goods.

The challenges of meeting demand have led to trialling several other substrates, such as wood fibre, to reduce the dependence on pine bark. Given that Europe and the US have gone this way it can only be a good thing for the industry.

With the ability to offer a variety of growing media options going forward the future to looks to be quite robust.

## The NextGen Is on the Rise

Our first NextGen event for the year was held in March at Honeysuckle Park in Dural, NSW. Despite the horrendous wet weather, it was great to see around 100 young green thumbs and their leaders in attendance.

On the night, attendees heard from committee members, the President of NGINA and guest speaker Graham Ross AM, with guests then taking a tour of Honeysuckle Park and enjoying a dinner together.

NGINA President, Malcolm Calder, spoke about the importance of supporting the next generation of nursery workers and how this is a priority focus area of NGINA's strategic plan. CEO, Anita Campbell, talked about offering support, encouragement and opportunities in order to allow a smooth transition into the industry. She encouraged all nursery employees to consider finding a younger person to mentor as only 15% of the nursery and garden workforce are under the age of 40. Horticulturalist, author, radio broadcaster and television presenter, Graham Ross AM, presented on his time in the industry and the role The Australian Garden Council has

played, and he also touched on BBM industry scholarships.

Peter Thorburn and the team at Honeysuckle Park presented a tour of their growing spaces and the interesting plants they supply to retail centres.

A local business, Miss Mabel's Food Truck, served up a delicious dinner of tacos, burgers, loaded fries and salads.

Our lucky door prize, which was a \$100 Visa gift card, was won by Scott Schubert of Northern Aspect Gardens Pty Ltd, who became a member of NGINA at the end of last year.

We'd love to again thank and acknowledge our diamond partner, Ozbreed, and NGINA's Growers & Suppliers Group and Wyee Nursery for their donations towards the event, and Peter Thorburn and his team at Honeysuckle Park for hosting. Also, a big congratulations to the NextGen Committee for pulling together such a successful and engaging event. The future is certainly looking bright for our growing industry.

Information about the next NextGen event will be released soon.



Left to right: Marc Patterson (Kenthurst Nursery), Evan Mueller (IGC), Malcolm Calder (Transplant Systems and NGINA President) and Ben Grange (Grange Growing Solutions)



Left to right: Joe Ayoub (Essentially Natural), David Ting (The Garden Guide), Sandra Ross, Graham Ross AM and Mike James (Essentially Natural)



Some NextGen Committee members, from left to right: Anita Campbell (NGINA CEO), Jack Thorburn (Honeysuckle Park), Ben Grange (Grange Growing Solutions), Jon Philliponi (Andreasens Green), Tahnee Moors (Alpine Nurseries) and Caitlin Desmond (Ozbreed)



Jarrod Burford (NGINA)







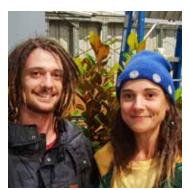
Left to right: Marc Patterson (Kenthurst Nursery), Graham Ross AM, Malcolm Calder (Transplant Systems and NGINA President) and Sandra Ross



Graham Ross AM and the next genners from Welby Garden Centre



Left to right: Anita Campbell (NGINA CEO), Mike James (Essentially Natural) and Sandra Ross















































# It's Never Too Early to Prepare for Judgment Day

by Brian Merrick, Retail Mentor and Consultant

Autumn is upon us, winter is just a cool breeze away and springtime is just around the corner. Not only is spring the busiest time of the year it can also be the most stressful. Even the most rational of operators can become a little unhinged. Planning and preparation are the foundation of smooth and profitable spring trading. There is no better time to start preparing for spring than now. Use autumn to plan and winter when trade is at its lowest to put your plans into action. Prepare well and you will be able to concentrate on what matters when you are busy, looking after your customers and making sales. There is nothing better than winding down at the end of a busy day knowing that you are worn out from serving customers, not from resolving issues you could have prepared for.



Main entrance to Heritage Nursery Yarralumla, last year's Retail Nursery of the Year winners

Preparing for spring and summer is made a lot easier when goals are set, giving a clear target to aim for. I can think of no better target to aim for than the NGINA "Retail Nursery of the Year" award. I know that not everyone can take out this award, but every retail nursery that aims for it, will undoubtedly benefit from the effort put in.

With that in mind I have prepared a checklist for spring. You are most likely already addressing a lot of these items in your business. However, it is always good to incorporate new ideas and refresh old ones.

To get an overall picture about how to prepare for spring and a shot at the awards it would be worthwhile reading my article in the summer 2020-21 issue of N&G News (pp. 28-29), where I give a broad outline of the good and not so good from last year's awards.

The checklist below, while not definitive, provides a starting point for planning your preparations for spring. It also covers the key criteria considered when the awards are judged.

#### **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

When approaching from the street is your garden centre easy to identify, are street signs appropriate and in good order, how convenient is the parking? Is the entrance easy to find? Does the general ambience feel friendly and welcoming? Does the layout of your garden centre make it easy for customers to navigate?

#### INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

Review all your physical infrastructure and bring it up to the best possible condition before spring arrives. Replace or repair old or damaged display units. These do not have to be new; they just need to be fresh and well looked after. Make sure paths are safe and in good condition. How well are you set up to assist the elderly and the disabled?

Plan and plant display gardens. Prepare promotional signs.



Figure 1: An example of a concept display

Are display areas and under tables free from weeds and debris? Indoor display units should be clean and tidy. The point-of-sale area should be easily located and be free from clutter.

Parking spaces are often at a premium in spring. Any that are unusable can cost you sales. Incoming goods and dispatch areas need to be checked for any repairs or improvements. They need to operate efficiently when spring arrives.

Evaluate your operating procedures. Update and adjust as required.

If you are planning to introduce, 'click and collect' and/or online shopping then now is the time to get it up and running, provided you can do so smoothy by spring. You do not want to be trying to resolve teething issues when all resources are essential to make sales.

#### **MERCHANDISE**

Is the range of greenlife appropriate for the season? Does the range reflect the size and niche of your garden centre? Is it in good health? When it comes to garden care and hardware the range of product would normally include potting mixes, mulches, fertilisers, tools, watering products and plant protection. Where there are environmentally friendly options available, are they clearly displayed? Garden décor may, according to the size and style of your garden centre, include some or all the following: pots, containers, water features, garden art and giftware. Check that they are clean and clearly priced. (Note: a dedicated gift shop is not critical to do well in the awards.) Overall, your inventory should reflect the personality and size of your garden centre.



Figure 2: An example of a power display



Figure 3: Examples of category signs

#### **MERCHANDISING AND DISPLAY**

Displays can be categorised into several types:

- Concept—these give customers ideas they can use in their own gardens (Figure 1).
- Seasonal—these display products that are currently in season or on trend.
- Power—"Stack them up high and watch them buy" normally consist of one item and price (Figure 2).
- Impulse—often on endcaps or near point-of-sale.
- Library—where stock is located when not in the above displays (i.e., your normal display beds).

Displays can have a big impact on sales. Well-stocked shelves and display stands with merchandise faced-up and clearly priced is a good starting point as is the use of endcaps. Displays that incorporate cross merchandising and display plants (used to sell smaller plants) step it up a level.

Signs also have a role. Category and subcategory signs are like street signs and assist customers to locate products (Figure 3). While product signs inform, they contain features and benefits, and often the price. Are your signs clean and relevant? I am always amazed how many times I find out-ofdate signs or signs that are in the wrong place because the stock has been shifted but not the sign.

#### **CUSTOMER SERVICES**

Now is a good time to review the services you offer to your customers. The list below is not comprehensive but covers the basics that would be expected from a retail outlet.

Do you have a prominent sign that lists the services you offer?

- Product/plant guarantee
- Trolleys, baskets, umbrellas, wheelchair, carry bags, boot liners, car service, etc.
- Toilets clean, tidy, and well stocked
- Gift vouchers, gift wrapping
- Deliveries
- First aid
- Café/refreshments (not critical to do well in the awards)
- Information area or available staff to assist

#### **STAFF**

When it comes to plants and gardens you never stop learning. There are always new products, plants and trends to stay abreast of. Keeping your staff up to date with these changes need not be a challenge but a fun time to build staff rapport. This is also a good time for new employees to learn your business culture and basic procedures. It will also be a great refresher for your more seasoned staff. Cover your dress codes, safety procedures, customer service standards and selling skills (it maybe worthwhile bringing in an independent person to brush up your staffs' selling skills). Ideally staff will be well presented in uniform, complete with name badge and sun protection. Do you have a spill kit, do your staff know where it is and how to use it?

#### MARKETING AND PROMOTION

This is a rapidly evolving area that seems to have good uptake in this industry. The traditional promoting via newspapers, radio and TV still have a place in some areas. However, web pages and social media platforms are becoming the dominant form of external marketing. Web pages need to be up to date

and easy to navigate. Internal marketing is limited only by your imagination. Some of the more common methods are:

- Loyalty schemes—this is easier with a good data base
- Events—garden courses, 'how to' classes, book launches, guest celebrity speakers, etc.

#### **MYSTERY SHOPPER**

If you have attended to the basics the mystery shopper should hold no fear. Last year all entrants received positive reports from the mystery shopper. Although one mystery shop for the awards is a little random, it still gives you a good snapshot of how your customers rate your service. However, the best way to be sure is to sign up for to a regular program of mystery shops<sup>1</sup>. This way if you do get any surprises they can be addressed well before the judging.

#### **SUMMARY**

Having put in the hard work to prepare for spring, there is one last thing you need to do, that is to enter your garden centre in the NGINA "Retail Nursery of the Year" award. There is one thing I have noticed over the years and that is when a garden centre enters the awards, and the staff get behind it, the outcome is always positive. Even if they do not take out the top award their business benefits from improved sales and staff morale. Keep an eye out for the nomination form it will not be all that far away.

<sup>1</sup> Mystery shopper programs are available through Garden Centres of Australia



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# **Production Nursery Awards** — Now is the Time to Prepare!

by Craig Perring, Business & Technical Support Manager, NGINA

2020 saw a record number of production nurseries enter NGINA's nursery awards, with Scotts Tubes taking home the prize of Wholesale Nursery of the Year. Traditionally this award is a much sought-after award within the NGINA membership it allows members to strive towards excellence, utilising industry best management practices to achieve the finest possible quality, while simultaneously showing their suppliers they are constantly investing back into their business.

Scotts Tubes is a NIASA accredited nursery, and Greg Scott (one of Scotts Tubes' Directors) said that the accreditation allows him to "check the checker", granting him an independent annual review of his nursery to ensure he is following the best management practices available in a competitively growing market.

"The benefits of being accredited far outweigh the small cost to remain accredited. It ensures an independent review of our business is carried out annually and that we keep up to date with the latest growing practices, technology and general best management practices," he said.

Although you do need to be an NGINA member to enter the awards, you don't need to be an accredited nursery.

Preparing for our awards provides growers with a goal to work towards and enables them to make improvements systematically over a six-month period, prior to judging taking place, avoiding last minute changes to production systems.

Some things to consider in preparation for the awards:

#### **PROPAGATION**

- If you outsource your propagation requirements, ensure your supplier is providing quality stock and carry out an inspection of all plant material for pest and disease symptoms upon arrival at the nursery.
- Ensure suitability and cleanliness of working benches and equipment in the propagation area.

- Regularly maintain propagation devices (such as heat beds, misting systems, etc.).
- Ensure proper disinfestation of propagules, surfaces, tools and propagation growing media.

#### **GROWING MEDIA**

- Whether you make your own growing media or use a reputable supplier, ensure proper disinfestation of growing media and/or components known to potentially carry plant pathogens (such as sand or recycled media).
- Ensure a thorough and hygienic mix of growing media components.
- Establish a testing protocol for pathogens, pH and electrical conductivity (EC) on all media.
- Ensure media is stored in a hygienic environment to limit risk of contamination.

#### **WATER**

- Many nurseries have a mix of water sources—surface water, recycled water, town and bore—all of which need be appropriately filtered, disinfested and hygienically stored.
- Establish testing and record-keeping protocols.
- Test for physical and chemical properties, such as pH and electrical conductivity.
- Ensure drainage capacity is adequate around all production areas, paths, roads and surrounds.
- Review and check irrigation systems for efficiency and effectiveness.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL**

- Evaluate runoff and erosion, and look to capture as much runoff as possible for reuse.
- Ensure chemicals storage is secure, record keeping is up to date and staff are appropriately trained in AQF III.





Weed free work areas, clean paths and clean stock is imperative for a successful production nursery

- Assess biosecurity risks in terms of invasive plants and weeds.
- Establish protocols to minimise waste and encourage recycling.

#### **DISPATCH AND PLANT QUALITY**

- Ensure efficient dispatch to avoid plant damage.
- Ensure transport carriers are minimising biosecurity risks between nurseries.
- Check that plants are free from any obvious pest or disease damage and show no detrimental symptoms.
- Ensure stock has an excellent nutritional status ready for sale.

#### **STAFF**

- Ensure all staff are inducted prior to undertaking any work and that policies around WH&S are up to date.
- Ensure appropriate staff are trained in AQF III and first aid, both of which can be organised through NGINA.
- Make sure your business has all safety equipment available (such as emergency showers, first aid kits, safety guards, fire extinguishers, dust masks and gloves, etc.), that it's in good working order, that it's located in the appropriate place and that all staff know how to use it.

The above are just some aspects that production nurseries should look at prior to entering NGINA's annual awards the list is by no means exhaustive, there are many more. However, it's worth noting that these are things that should be considered as a matter of course to maintain a professional image, help prevent reputational damage, ensure customer satisfaction and guarantee a successful nursery.

NGINA encourages participation in the awards—look at it as an opportunity to provide an independent overview of your business and highlight areas for improvement, while showing your colleagues within the industry that you are investing back into your business, you care about your quality of product and are always looking for ways to improve.

What three to five continuous improvements can you do to your business over the next six months in preparation for our awards? Now is the time to consider them!

Please contact me for a site inspection and ideas on how you can strive towards excellence.

Contact Craig Perring on 0404 407 262 or email craig.perring@ngina.com.au.

NUMBER!



Chris Aitken, of Ramm Botanicals, gives his crop the thumbs up

### Time to Rebrand? Here's How to Tell

### Is it time to think about rebranding your business?

Are you confident you're presenting your company in the best possible light? If the answer is 'no', rebranding may be an option, but it's not a cheap exercise. So, how can you tell whether it's going to be a good investment or a waste of time and money?

By doing some research before you get started, says branding expert Troy McKinna, co-founder of Agents of Spring. That includes finding out whether your current branding clearly communicates what it is you're selling—and does so in a way that resonates.

#### IT MIGHT BE TIME TO REFRESH

So, if your branding is currently missing the mark, or if major changes in the market have left it looking outdated, it might be time for a refresh.

Don't make changes for the sake of it, McKinna counsels. Many business owners update their branding too often because they're bored with the status quo or they've hired a new marketing manager who wants to put their stamp on the operation.

"The danger is, you can make it harder for people to remember you if they're seeing something different each time," McKinna says. "Customers might not register it's the same company or product. That's why some of the most iconic brands, like Mars and Coca-Cola, go decades without change."

#### **SPROUTING A NEW IMAGE**

Peter Duncan, General Manager of Parilla Fresh, a fresh sprouts manufacturer and distributor, has overseen the rebranding process twice in the past eight years.

Based in Milperra NSW, the business grows, packs and distributes a range of fresh sprouts to major supermarkets and speciality food retailers on the east coast. Its products were originally labelled 'Parilla Fresh', but in 2011 the company realised the branding was doing it no favours.

"When we asked consumers what 'Parilla Fresh' meant to them, we found it didn't mean much at all," Duncan says.

"Some people thought we were a pasta company or sold dairy products. And when we spoke to Coles, Woolies and independent retailers, they wanted different lines and labels."

Parilla Fresh subsequently developed two new brands— 'Good for You and You' for the major chains and 'Hugo's Fresh' for the independents.

While the latter label is still going strong, 'Good for You and

You' was replaced with the snappier 'Aussie Sprouts' in 2018.

"It turned out 'Good for You and You' was also confusing for the consumers, and it didn't really reflect anything about what we stand for," Duncan says.

The second time around, Parilla Fresh spent a total of \$15,000 to \$50,000 on rebranding and registering trademarks, and \$100,000 to promote its new image to customers.

Sales subsequently jumped 25% and the change has been well received by the major supermarket chains. Making rebranding part of a broader marketing strategy has been key to the company's success, Duncan believes.

Our new branding is about freshness and being Australian, and to reinforce that we use the tagline 'great green stuff'.

#### IT'S ALL IN THE RESEARCH

Research conducted prior to the rebrand revealed that although key customer segments—young women, fitness fans, vegans and mothers with small children—liked the products, they wanted more information on how to cook and serve them.

"As a result, we've made our website and social media much more recipe-based," Duncan says. "You need to get a good handle on who your customers are and what they're thinking in order to develop a brand that appeals to them. And you have to spend money to let people know about it."

Smart businesses do as Parilla Fresh has done—they get their strategy right first, and are willing to invest a reasonable amount on developing and promoting their new image, McKinna says.

"A lot of people see it as an expense, not an investment, and will skimp on the design costs or don't want to pay for professional advice from a branding or marketing expert," McKinna says. "Those can be false economies, because getting your brand right is something that's really going to see your business grow."

The way you present your business is critical to its success. If customers aren't connecting with your brand as much as you'd like them to, it might be time to invest in a new look and feel.

The above article was originally published by our business solutions partner, Business Australia.



Two NGINA members have successfully rebranded and here touch on the whys and wherefores, and share their insights into the whole rebranding process.

The opening of our flagship Milperra store in early 2019 was a milestone in our rebranding process. It allowed us to relaunch the Flower Power brand as a modern, contemporary garden centre, providing quality plants and products, inspiration and expert advice to our customers.

This comprehensive rebrand encompasses every facet of the business, from point-of-sale material and in-store signage to press advertising, email marketing, social media and a relaunched website, extending to our staff uniforms and vehicle fleet. We've also invested in industrial printing and cutting machinery so that we can complete the rollout of our new signage across all 10 of our garden centres in-house, rather than contracting this out to an external signage company.

As part of the rebrand, we retired our old "Sunny" logo in favour of a new one which brings us in line with current



design standards. The new Flower Power has a modern look and feel and features clean typography, inspirational imagery and uncluttered messaging—helping us to truly establish ourselves as "The Garden People".

Mark Sammut, Operations Director, Flower Power

In celebration of their 20th birthday in 2020, Oasis turned over a new leaf with an exciting new look. The rebrand includes a refreshed logo, new consumer-friendly labels for all products, a focus on sustainability across their entire range and the addition of more advanced seedling lines.

This is the first masterbrand overhaul since Oasis' inception in 2000. As well as a more modern refreshed (yet still familiar) logo, the rebrand focused on reducing consumer confusion and improving the shopability of the overall brand and ranges. Oasis has chosen to optimise their 10 ranges with a consistent look, which will improve the consumers' shopping experience and reduce complexity for consumers when reading product labels. The new modernised packaging and easy-to-read labels were designed to appeal to both experienced and new gardeners.

A focus on sustainability was also key in this rebrand by Oasis—their old three- and six-cell blue punnets (made from polystyrene materials) have now been replaced with fourand six-cell black punnets. These industry-standard black pots are made from polypropylene that is easier to recycle and reuse.

Oasis has also responded to consumer purchasing decisions in this rebranding—by increasing their range of more advanced plants so consumers can achieve the desired "established garden" look faster. And by increasing their range of larger cell punnets, Oasis is giving consumers a plant with a larger root zone—which in turn is more likely to survive and thrive in the consumer's home garden. Favourite ranges like 'Flower Patch' and 'Veggie Patch' remain but



additions include the Gourmet Harvest range filled with premium fruit and vegetable choices and the Flower Boutique range loaded with unique high-performance varieties that will bring colour to gardens all year around. In response to consumer demand Oasis has also added a four-cell punnet to their 'Flowers to Go' range—this joins the very popular six- and 10-cell packs already in this range. The four-cell packs appeal to gardeners with smaller spaces or potted gardens and they are a great starting product for a beginner flower grower.

So, overall the rebrand has focused on harmonising and updating the look and feel of the whole Oasis product offering but also rationalisation of non-performing products. The ultimate objective focused on making the shopping experience easier for consumers. While the overall brand and sub-brands have changed based on the objectives defined, we have also focused on updating product label icons to further assist the new gardeners that we have seen enter the category during the COVID period.

David Jakobs, CEO, Oasis Horticulture



### New plant breeding is reducing weed problems and helping preserve Australian biodiversity.

The first record of an Australian plant was made by Spanish explorers in the Torres Strait in 1606. More famously, and more than a century later, Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander collected 132 specimens of Australian plants at Botany Bay and added many others as the Endeavour sailed along the Australian coast. Subsequently Banks advised on the choice of plants and seeds to be taken by the First Fleet to the new settlement. Thus began the purposeful introduction of foreign plants into Australia.

The first Australian Horticultural Society was established in about 1826. By the 1830s roses and geraniums were growing abundantly in Hobart. Grand gardens filled with mainly exotic plants were being established around Sydney mansions. Little attempt was made by the colonists and early gardeners to learn how First Nations peoples used native plants.

In the nineteenth century indigenous plants from the Australian colonies were well received in Europe and Britain but not always given the same respect in their homeland. At the same time exotic plants continued to be brought into Australia. Many of these introductions settled in so comfortably that they began to breed and spread. Indigenous plants from various parts of the vast Australian continent also became invasive as they were taken to new areas. But weeds were still regarded as an agricultural, rather than ecological, problem.

It wasn't until the latter part of the 20th century that we began to appreciate the threats posed to our unique flora and natural biodiversity by the uncontrolled introduction and cultivation of ornamental plants with weed potential. Bush regeneration teams began to work in areas that were lightly weed infested, thus allowing the bush to reclaim its territory. Gardeners gradually became more conscious of the problems they could cause by growing and dumping weedy plants. Government and private bodies worked to earmark weeds and to set up weed control bodies. A 2005 report, Jumping the Garden Fence, produced by CSIRO for the World Wildlife Fund, expressed concern about the number of invasive garden plants that were still available for sale to Australian gardeners.

The modern Australian nursery industry is committed to stemming the spread of weeds from Australian gardens. In the early 21st century the New South Wales and ACT nursery association introduced a program called Grow Me Instead to help gardeners recognise common invasive plants and instead plant garden-worthy replacements. Grow Me Instead

has since spread to nursery associations around Australia (growmeinstead.com.au).

Plant breeders are playing their part by working to develop plant varieties that are unlikely to create weed problems. Todd Layt from Ozbreed explains, "Great exotic species can be improved through breeding, and their invasive qualities either reduced or eliminated. Many exotics have been selected by seed growers for prolific seed set. We do the opposite by looking for low to no seed set in our trials."

As an example Todd has bred Gazania 'Double Gold'. The popular, hardy and cheerful South African gazanias have a dark side because they develop copious seeds that invade natural areas in warm climates with well-drained soils (i.e., much of Australia). By selecting gazania cultivars such as 'Double Gold' that have almost no reproductive capability, gardeners and landscapers can go back to enjoying these colourful daisies. Other safer gazania varieties to look for are 'Montezuma', 'Sunset Jane', 'Sahara', 'Dynamo' and 'Zanya'.



Gazania 'Double Gold' is a free flowering sterile variety of this popular ground cover. (Image: Ozbreed)

Rhaphiolepis, commonly called Indian hawthorns, are popular and hardy evergreen shrubs that, due to their unwelcome fecundity, appear on many weed lists. The seed-filled berries

on the species are attractive to birds that unwittingly act as super spreaders. Ozbreed has developed two *Rhaphiolepis* cultivars, R. 'Çosmic White' and R. 'Cosmic Pink', first bred by Mr Vic Ciccolella, to avoid this problem. Both varieties have extremely low seed set but still boast a showy floral display.

John Robb, plant breeder at Paradise Plants in Kulnura NSW, has bred two of the most popular *Rhaphiolepis* cultivars—'Oriental Pearl' and 'Oriental Pink'. As John says, "Recent breeding has seen the development of new selections of R. indica which have very low seed set and very low fertility. In trials at Paradise Nurseries we have found there is massive variation in the quantity of seed produced by different Rhaphiolepis varieties when grown under the same conditions. For example, in our 2015 trial the straight species produced an average of 1982 seeds per plant while R. 'Oriental Pearl' produced no seed."



Rhaphiolepis 'Pink Pearl' produces an abundance of mid-pink flowers (Image: Paradise Plants)

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John is also breeding new butterfly bushes (Buddleia spp.) with low sterility, such as the fragrant B. 'Spring Promise'. Many other less invasive versions of plants renowned for their weed potential are now available. For example, safer varieties of agapanthus (look for 'Queen Mum', 'Snowball' and others), African iris (Dietes spp.) and fountain grass Pennisetum alopecuroides are readily found in nurseries.

The Plant Sure Scheme (gardeningresponsibly.org.au) helps growers, retailers and gardeners identify ornamental plants that won't cause harm to our unique Australian environment. And home gardeners can take heart that new breeding is allowing them to grow some formerly maligned plants without threatening our precious natural biodiversity.

This article was written by Judy Horton and originally appeared in Hort Journal, March 2021



# **New Releases**

Six new pansy and viola varieties to add vibrant colour to Autumn gardens this season.

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# Weeds, Algae and Biofilms in Irrigation Lines and Water

by Garden City Plastics' Agronomy Team

Many would agree that that the climate is changing more rapidly in recent years. In my interactions with growers, I would often hear them say, "Mate, I don't usually have this problem at this time of the year. It has come much earlier." The truth is, no season is the same and growing conditions—capacity, market, economics, etc.—are not the same.

Recently, many growers started having issues with their dams: blockages of filters and in irrigation lines. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Many growers have almost doubled their production capacities, thanks to COVID. Therefore, more fertilisers, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, would have leached out into their dams in higher quantities than in the past, only waiting for the right weather conditions to promote their growth. In spring, we experienced a couple of spikes in temperatures and saw the weeds, algae and biofilms respond well.

#### **WEEDS**

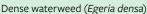
Weeds such as duckweed (*Lemna disperma Hegelm*) and dense waterweed (*Egeria densa*) have become a nuisance in nursery dams and ponds in many parts of Australia. Duckweed is native to Australia from the family Araceae and can form a dense green mat on the surface of a slow-moving or stationary water body in nutrient rich conditions. They include the smallest flowering plants on Earth. Duckweed has tiny, white, barely visible flowers and spread mainly by fragments. It's regarded as an herb, floating on the surface of water with solitary roots. The twig is elliptic to rounded or broad-obovate, and 1–4 mm long. The colony is made up of generations at angles less than 90° to the previous one.



Duckweed (Lemna disperma Hegelm)

Dense waterweed (*Egeria densa*) is a very leafy aquatic plant that grows almost entirely underwater. Its stems (up to 5-metres long) are usually anchored to the substrate but can sometimes be free-floating at the water surface. Dense foliage (due to the leaf whorls being close together), larger leaves and distinctive showy white flowers help distinguish Egeria densa from related species.







This weed has become widely naturalised in Australia, particularly in water bodies nearer to major cities and other populated areas in the south eastern and eastern parts of the country. It is most common in south-eastern Queensland, in coastal New South Wales and in southern Victoria (i.e., near Melbourne). It is also present in southwestern Western Australia (i.e., near Perth), in some inland parts of southern New South Wales and in Tasmania. In addition, it was naturalised in south-eastern South Australia and is possibly naturalised in the Northern Territory.

Other common weeds found in aquatic areas include Red Azolla, water hyacinth, Salvinia, Marsilea, water lilies and water lettuce, cattails and pondweed.



Cattails

#### **BIOFILMS**

Biofilms are common and exist everywhere. For instance, plaque on teeth is a form of biofilm, as is the slime in a water bottle, or in the shower or your sink drainpipe. Biofilms are generally a complex network of microorganisms that attach themselves to solid surfaces for the purposes of reproduction and survival. Once attached, they form extracellular polymeric substances (EPS), which are very tough polysaccharides that protect the bacteria from degradation. These bacterial matrices can provide a home for dangerous pathogens and cause blockages when they exist in irrigation lines.

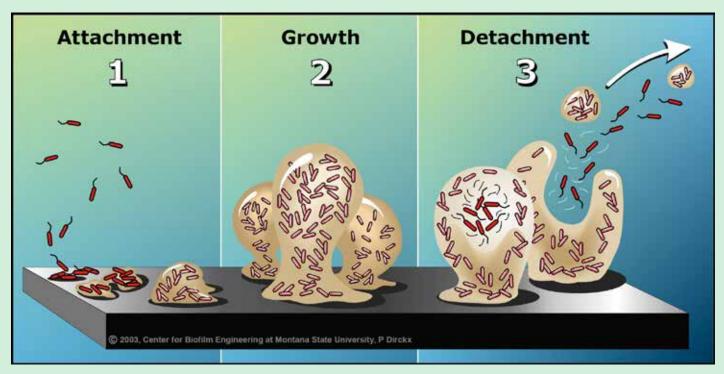
The characteristics of biofilms makes it difficult to entirely remove these organisms from production systems. For instance, biofilms concentrate nutrients. Even sterilised water with the slightest nutrient levels can still support biofilm growth. Also, the formation of EPS helps to reduce the efficacy of biocides, hence a continuous management program is required to keep them in check.

The best control of biofilms is prevention with standard hygiene and disinfection practices. Sanitisation will reduce the amount of biofilm that develops. The effectiveness of oxidising biocides decreases in the following order—ozone > chlorine dioxide > chlorine > hydrogen peroxide. Typical chlorine levels in town water are between 0.5–2.0 ppm. This amount of chlorine has been shown to kill free-floating bacteria but may not be enough to kill biofilm bacteria

due to the protection afforded by the slime on the biofilm. Therefore, continuous chlorine dioxide injection (Vibrex system), which is a much more affordable up-front solution, can penetrate the mature biofilm and over time will destroy the biofilm matrix. It is important to review the chlorine dioxide product to make sure the formulation enables a controlled release, as some products can be toxic to plants.

Decreasing pH will also enhance the effectiveness of chlorine treatment due to the production of more efficient forms of chlorine. Quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs) are a non-oxidising biocide option that may have some effects in specific situations, e.g., preventing biofilms on nursery surfaces, and anionic and non-ionic surfactants can also be used but their effect is limited. In some situations, heat could also be considered if surfaces or pipework can be heated sufficiently, e.g., pipework in bottom heat systems or steam cleaning surfaces.

Where possible, reducing the amount of nutrients in water will minimise the growth of biofilms. Practices such as using reed beds to reduce nutrient loads may help in achieving this. Some other methods used to control biofilm formation include mechanical and manual cleaning, chemical cleaning, application of hot water and flushing pipes to reduce the thickness of the biofilm.



# Cyanobacteria— Blue Green Algae

#### **ALGAE**

Algae are very small plants capable of growing very quickly in certain conditions. These rapid increases in algal populations, referred to as 'blooms', are most often seen as changes in colouration of the water or as a scum on the water's surface. Blue green algae are a specific type of bacteria called cyanobacteria, which behave similarly to green algae. Cyanobacteria are of concern to human health as they release toxins into the water as the cells die and can cause liver or nerve damage if present in drinking water.

Temperature, light and nutrient levels play a major role in the establishment of algae blooms. Therefore, when these factors are high, especially in spring and summer months, we tend to see more issues in the nursery. As often stated, prevention of algal bloom is better than trying to cure a bloom once it has occurred.

TABLE 1: ALGAE SPECIES PRESENT IN WATER STORAGES

Common Name	Species
Filamentous green algae	Cladophora Hydrodictyon (water net) Spirogyra
Stoneworts	Chara Nitella
Blue-green algae	Anacystis cyanea Anabaena circinalis
Diatoms	Navicula Cycotella Melorisa
Euglenoids	Euglena

Generally, strategies to prevent weeds, algal blooms and biofilms in water bodies include but are not limited to the following:

- Controlling the amount of nutrient runoff in water bodies. The level of nutrients in water bodies can be ascertained by carrying out water tests to see if levels are high enough for algal growth.
- Aeration increases dissolved oxygen levels, therefore, enhance the breakdown of suspended solids, encourage beneficial bacteria, and lower the ammonia and nitrate levels.
- Introduction of beneficial bacteria, such as Biostim, to remove excess nutrients and biologically purify and degrade algae.
- Ferric alum applied at a rate of 100mg/L and applied by suspending the product in a bag in the water has been shown to reduce phosphorous levels by causing the phosphorus to settle out (precipitate).
- Chemical alternatives, such as chlorine dioxide to target biofilms in irrigation lines, diquat or peroxygen compounds to kill off weeds and oxidise algae on water bodies respectively, the use of copper-based algicides and other actives, such as benzalkonium chloride, on surfaces to target algae.

#### PRODUCT REVIEW

#### **BIOSTIM BIOLOGICAL TREATMENTS**

The Biostim range is a selection of biological treatments that are 100% fish friendly and aquatic-life safe when correctly applied. Crafted from a unique blend of beneficial bacteria mixed with vitamins, micro-nutrients and some special boosters, these treatments can greatly improve your general water quality while also reducing the severity and frequency of issues.

Biostim introduces beneficial bacteria into the water body to outcompete undesirable bacteria and other microorganisms responsible for odour, slime and sludge build-up at the bottom of the water body. The Biostim microorganisms work to reduce the levels of nutrients especially nitrogen and phosphorus present in the water,

thereby making it difficult for algae build up.

The Biostim range is available in three different formulations, namely: liquid, powder and pellets. It is important to note that while all products in the range can be used for spot treatments or to treat entire water bodies for multiple problems, each individual product has been formulated to be particularly suited to dealing with a specific set of issues. This means that although your biological augmentation process will still be effective, using the 'wrong' product for your situation can lead to a reduction in results.

The liquid formulation is used to target suspended organic matter and for new systems that only require low doses

and cost might be an issue. It is also suited for an ongoing maintenance program and it exists in 20-litre packaging.

The powder formulation is used in situations where there is suspended matter within and above the water column. This is adopted in for very intensive treatment of nasty water and it comes in 3-kg and 20-kg pack sizes. The powder is packaged within the tubs in individual 500-gram dissolvable satchels and a direct replacement for the out-of-date LakePak.

Biostim pellets are utilised to degrade muck and sludge at the bottom of water bodies. It is best suited to both old dams and large irrigation dams with high flow or pumping where the powder and liquid formulations will be easily dosed away.

The ingredients in the Biostim range are considered class one, any livestock drinking the water, or humans fishing or swimming in it, will not face any negative impacts from being exposed to the treatment or over application. It is recommended to commence with a high initial dose and then use a low dose for monthly maintenance. The combination of Biostim with aeration gives a better result and should be encouraged.



#### **PRODUCT REVIEW**

#### **ALGAE LIFT**

This is a peroxygen-based product whose chemistry acts by oxidising the cell wall of algae, burning off the chlorophyll-a, and making it susceptible to attack from naturally occurring bacteria. Algae Lift increases bio-available oxygen as it works so is an ideal combination with biological (bacterial) water treatment products such as the Biostim range.

Algae Lift comes in a granular formulation allowing it to sink to the bottom of the dam to clean organic build up and sludge. Treated waters can be used without interruption or withholding periods and it leaves only water and oxygen behind. It is completely fish friendly and aquatic-life safe when applied correctly. Algae Lift can be used to treat the

entire water volume or for spot treatments and should be applied by spreading or broadcasting over the treatment area where it can sink and attach to the treatment site.

If applying to thick surface mats the mats may need to be disturbed so that Algae Lift has good contact with both the treatment site and water in order to dissolve and work effectively. The effectiveness of Algae Lift can be seen after only a few minutes of application. This is shown by bubbling, bleaching and discoloration of the treated material.

Algae Lift can also be used as a cleaning agent to remove organic build up from filters and other equipment with organic fouling.



#### **PRODUCT REVIEW**

#### **AQUATIC WEED KILLER**

Herbicides used in killing aquatic weeds are very few and highly regulated due to their impact on aquatic organisms. Within the GCP range, we only have Sierraron 4G and Casoron 4G pre-emergent herbicides—active ingredient dichlobenil with label approval for use in aquatic areas and to target aquatic weeds such as ribbonweed, pondweed, Mifolis (cattail) and chara.

Aquatic Weed Killer contains the active constituent of 200g/L diquat active constituent: 200 g/L DIQUAT present as diquat dibromide monohydrate.

Water Treats Aquatic Weed Killer is a selective liquid herbicide that controls over 15 major aquatic weeds including floating, emergent and subsurface species. It has label approval to target duckweeds, Red Azolla, water hyacinth, Salvinia, Marsilea, water lilies and water lettuce, cattail and pond weeds.

The Aquatic Weed Killer works on contact with the green parts of nuisance aquatic weeds (leaves and stems) and it is rapidly absorbed producing peroxide that acts like a bleach, desiccating plant tissue and disrupting cell membranes. It is rapidly removed from the water and deactivated by adsorption onto inorganic and organic compounds in the water and sediments. It may, therefore, be negatively affected by turbid water or if plants are covered with silt or an algal coating.



Please note that in presence of uncertainty or the slightest concern that you may have Blue Green Algae, do not apply fast algae removal treatments of any kind. Rapid disruption of cyanobacteria cells prompts them to release their toxins, which can be deadly. Garden City Plastics has access to these products from Water Quality Solutions and can make them available to customers on demand. We would evaluate and consider adding these products (Algae Lift and Water Treats Aquatic Weed Killer) on range once demands are optimal.







# Successful Blitz Against Environmental Crime

A state-wide environmental crime campaign by Crime Stoppers was implemented in late 2020 to address the ongoing issue of crimes devastating our waterways.

For the first time Crime Stoppers collaborated with both Local Land Services (LLS) and the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) on a dedicated campaign to address the illegal trading of certain plants catastrophic to our waterways.

One of the key objectives of the campaign was raising the awareness of this crime—helping the community understand which plants are <u>illegal to trade</u> and why they have a detrimental effect on our environment—and this proved a success.

A widespread social media campaign was conducted and reached over 350,000 people during the course of the campaign. There was also extensive editorial support in key print media and radio coverage across NSW.

Plants like water hyacinth, frogbit and salvinia are illegal to trade and devastating to our environment. These plants grow at a rapid rate, block waterways, reduce water quality and can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to control. For livestock, birds and other native animals these plants restrict access to water, they reduce food and shelter for fish and native animals, and prevent native water plants from growing. These water plants also put the economy and our community at risk. Penalties of up to \$1.1 million or three years imprisonment are in place for individuals found to be selling these plants.

However, this is not common knowledge among the wider community.

Crime Stoppers, with LLS and DPI, reached out to the community and industry partners to help spread awareness, as well as help monitor illegal trading of these plants online.

Industry support was also garnered from local government authorities and the Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT.

"A whole of community approach has truly made a positive impact and we wish to thank the community for their support





Frogbit found in Campbelltown, NSW







Prohibited plant campaign

in acknowledging and sharing information as well as reporting when they saw suspicious activity online," said CEO, NSW Crime Stoppers, Peter Price AM.

If you see, know or suspect criminal activity, contact Crime Stoppers in complete confidence on 1800 333 000 or report online at nsw.crimestoppers.com. We don't need to know who you are, we just need to know what you know

For more information about the three targeted weed species visit weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au



# Minor Use Permits for Nursery Stock (as of February 2021)

Before a pesticide can be used in Australia, it must first be registered for use with the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). The registration process requires pesticide manufacturers to submit a comprehensive application including information on its chemistry and manufacture, the toxicological impacts on public and occupational health, any residues, environmental safety of the product, and the efficacy of the product.

Developing or obtaining the data to support an application is expensive. In small crop/pest situations, this expense can be cost prohibitive, especially when limited economic gain or return on investment is achievable. In these situations, however, a permit may be granted which allows for the legal use of a pesticide in a minor use application. This permit allows for the use of a pesticide outside of its label instructions. Permits may also be granted by APVMA for use in emergency situations—such as an exotic pest incursion, disease outbreak or for use in research applications.

Before using a chemical under a minor use permit (MUP), growers should have a copy of the permit and read and comply with all

the details, conditions and limitations noted in the permit.

Table 1 below lists the current MUPs held by Greenlife Industry Association (GIA) on behalf of industry. Additional MUPs applicable to the production nursery industry held by other parties are listed in Table 2.

Before using these permits it is advised that growers check the currency of the permit on APVMA's website (portal.apvma. gov.au/permits) as permit versions may change without notice. The registration of products can also be checked on APVMA's website (portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris). Growers seeking to use chemicals under a MUP are reminded to seek a copy of the permit and comply with all directions and limitations noted in the permit.

GIA manages the nursery industry MUP pesticide program under the levy-funded National Biosecurity and Sustainable Plant Production Program (NY20001). For further information or if you have identified active ingredients that may be useful to add to the list of industry MUPs, please contact GIA's National Biosecurity Manager John McDonald, at john.mcdonald@greenlifeindustry.com.au or call o7 3277 7900.

**TABLE 1: CURRENT MUPS HELD BY GIA** 

Permit Number	Permit Description	Mode of Action Group	Expiration
PER87445	Sero-X Insecticide (Clitoria ternatea extract) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food), Cut Flowers and Ornamentals / Heliothis, Silverleaf whitefly & Green mirid	Insecticide	29-Feb-24
PER87437	BOTECTOR FUNGICIDE (Aureobasidium pullulans) / nursery stock (non food) / Botrytis	Group NC Fungicide	31-Jan-24
PER88695	Voliam Targo (abamectin + chlorantraniliprole) / Nursery Stock (non-food) / control of: leafminer, lepidoptera larvae, mites, psyllids, thrips. Suppression of: beetles, bugs, leafhopper, weevils, whitefly	Group 6 and 28 Insecticide	28-Feb-24
PER88977	Various insecticides (abamectin, azadirachtin, cyromazine, emamectin, chlorantraniliprole + thiamethoxam, cyantraniliprole, indoxacarb, spinetoram) / Nursery Stock (non-food) / leafminers	Various	30-Nov-22

Permit Number	Permit Description	Mode of Action Group	Expiration
PER88719	Serifel Biofungicide (Bacillus amyloliquefaciens strain MB1600) / Nursery Stock (non-food) / suppression of various foliar and soil diseases/ <b>Foliar:</b> Alternaria leaf spot (Alternaria spp.), Anthracnose (Colletotrichum spp.), Cercospora leaf spot (Cercospora spp.), Downy Mildew (Peronospora spp.), Grey Mould (Botrytis cinerea), Powdery Mildew (Erysiphe/Leveillula/Podosphaera/ Sphaerotheca spp.), Rust (Puccinia spp.) and White Mould/Watery soft rot (Sclerotinia spp.). Soil/Media: Fusarium Wilt (Fusarium spp.), Leaf Drop (Sclerotinia spp.), Phytophthora Root Rot (Phytophthora spp.), Pythium Damping Off (Pythium spp.), Rhizoctonia Rot (Rhizoctonia spp.) and Verticillium Wilt (Verticillium spp.).	Group 44 Fungicide	31-July-22
PER89330	Acephate (LANCER or ORTHENE), acetamiprid+ novaluron (CORMORAM), alpha-cypermethrin (DOMINEX or CONQUEST ALPHA FORTE), azadirachtin (AZAMAX), chlorantraniliprole (CORAGEN or ACELEPRYN GR), chlorantraniliprole + thiamethoxam (DURIVO), cyantraniliprole + thiamethoxam (SPINNER TURF), emamectin (PROCLAIM), indoxacarb (AVATAR or PROVAUNT TURF)), lambda-cyhalothrin (KARATE ZEON), Methomyl (LANATE-L), methoxyfenozide (PRODIGY) and pyrethrins (PYGANIC). NURSERY STOCK (NON-FOOD) – SEEDLINGS, TUBES & PLUGS, POTTED COLOUR, TREES AND SHRUBS, FOLIAGE PLANTS, PALMS, GRASSES, FRUITING PLANTS (NON-BEARING), CUT FLOWERS AND ORNAMENTALS'. Fall armyworm (Spodoptera frugiperda)	Multiple groups including: 1B, 4A, 3A, 6, 18, 22A, 28.	30-Jun-22
PER88741	Actinovate Biofungicide (Streptomyces lydicus WYEC108) / Nursery Stock (non-food) / Fusarium wilt, Powdery mildew, Phytophthora root rot, Pythium damping-off, Rhizoctonia rot (suppression)	Group 9D Insecticide	31-Mar-22
PER88660	Versys Insecticide (afidopyropen) / Nursery Stock (non-food) / various aphids and Silverleaf whitefly	Group 9D Insecticide Insecticide	28-Feb-23
PER88657	Versys Insecticide (afidopyropen) / Nursery Stock (non-food) / various aphids and Silverleaf whitefly	Group 9D Insecticide Insecticide	28-Feb-23
PER88657	Banrot 400 WP & 80G (thiophanate-methyl + etridiazole) / Nursery Stock (non-food) / damping-off, root and stem rots caused by: <i>Pythium, Phytophthora, Rhizoctonia, Theilaviopsis</i> ( <i>Chalara</i> )	Group 1 14 Fungicide	28-Feb-23
PER81707	Acramite Miticide (BIFENAZATE) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food)/ Mites	Group 2D	30-Jun-21
PER90148	Acrobat/Mancozeb (DIMETHOMORPH & MANCOZEB) / Nursery Stock (Nonfood) / Alternaria, Anthracnose, Downey Mildew & Phytophthora	Group 40/M3	31-Jul-21
PER81707	Admiral Insect Growth Regulator Insecticide (PYRIPROXYFEN) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food) / Whiteflies and Fungus Gnats	Group 7C	30-Jun-21
PER90148	Amistar (AZOXYSTROBIN) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food) / Downy Mildew, Powdery Mildew, Grey Mould, Rusts and Leaf Spots	Group 11	31-Jul-21
PER81707	Applaud Insecticide (BUPROFEZIN) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food) / Mealybug, Leafhoppers, Scale and Whitefly	Group 16	30-Jun-21
PER81707	Avatar Insecticide (INDOXACARB) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food)/ European Earwig, Heliothis, Lightbrown Apple Moth & Weevils.	Group 22A	30-Jun-21
PER84303	Barricade Turf Herbicide (PRODIAMINE) Nursery Stock (Non-Food) Preemergent For Grass and Broad Leaf Weeds	Group D Herbicide	30-Apr-22

Permit Number	Permit Description	Mode of Action Group	Expiration
PER14856	Bifenthrin, Chlorothalonil, Chlorpyrifos, Imidacloprid, Mancozeb / Nursery stock (nonfood) / Quarantine pests	Various	31-May-23
PER90148	Blue Shield DF Copper Fungicide (COPPER HYDROXIDE) Nursery Stock (Nonfood)/Alternaria, Colletrotrichum, Downy Mildew, Myrtle Rust	Group M2	31-Jul-21
PER81707	Chess Insecticide & Fulfill Insecticide (PYMETROZINE) / Nursery Stock (Nonfood) / Aphids and Whitefly	Group 9B	30-Jun-21
PER81707	Confidor 200 SC (IMIDACLOPRID) / Propagation Nursery Stock (Non-Food) / Silverleaf Whitefly	Group 4A	30-Jun-21
PER86931	CORMORAN INSECTICIDE (Containing: 80 g/L ACETAMIPRID and 100 g/L NOVALURON as the only active constituent) / NURSERY STOCK (NON-FOOD), CUT FLOWERS AND ORNAMENTALS / Aphids, Bugs (Hemiptera spp.), Leafhoppers, Lepidoptera larvae, Mealybugs, Psyllids, Scale, Thrips	Group 15/4A Insecticide	31-Jan-24
PER80699	Sporekill (dodecyl dimethyl ammonium chloride), Oxydul (copper oxychloride), Grochem Copper (copper sulphate pentahydrate) & methylated spirits / nursery stock growing surfaces / pathogens (bacterial and fungal organisms)	Various	31-Jul-25
PER86930	Dimethoate systemic insecticide plus other registered products (Dimethoate) - cut flowers, ornamentals and other (non-food) nursery stock / Spiraling Whitefly and Mirids	Group 1B Insecticide	30-Nov-23
PER83506	Diptex Insect Growth Regulator (cyromazine) / Nursery stock (non-food) / larvae of leafminer flies and Sciarid flies	Group 1B Insecticide	31-Oct-22
PER81707	Dominex Duo Insecticide (ALPHA-CYPERMETHERIN) Nurserystock (nonfood)/Aphids,Cutworms, Grasshoppers, Locust, Rutherglen bug & Thrips	Group 3A	30-Jun-21
PER81707	Durivo insecticide (THIAMETHOXAM/ CHLORANTRANILIPROLE) /Nursery stock (nonfood)/ Lepidoptera including Diamonback Moth, Cabbage White Butterfly, Helicoverpa, Caterpillars, Loopers, Leafhoppers, Aphids, Whitefly, Bugs, Thrips & Leafrollers	Group 4A/28	30-Jun-21
PER81707	Insegar Insecticide (FENOXYCARB) / Nursery stock (nonfood) / Lepidoptera pests and San Jose scale	Group 7B	30-Jun-21
PER83964	Mainman 500 WG insecticide (flonicamid) / nursery stock / aphids, mealybugs, mirids, silverleaf whitefly and thrips & western flower thrips (suppression)	Group 9C Insecticide	31-Dec-22
PER90148	MANCOZEB / Nursery Stock (Non-Food) / Alternaria, Anthracnose, Cercospora, Downy Mildew, Grey Mould, Leaf Spot, Phoma, Rhizoctonia, Rust	Group M3 Fungicide	31-Jul-21
PER81707	Movento Insecticide (SPIROTETRAMAT)/Nursery stock (nonfood)/Aphids, Silverleaf whitefly & Scale insects	Group 23	30-Jun-21
PER90148	Nimrod Fungicide (BUPIRIMATE)/Nursery Stock (Non-Food)/ Powdery Mildew	Group 8	31-Jul-21
PER81707	Orthene & Lancer Insecticide (ACERPHATE) Nursery stock (non-food) Western Flower Thrips	Group 1B	30-Jun-21
PER81707	Paramite Insecticide (ETOXAZOLE) Nursery stock (non-food) Spider mites	Group 10B	30-Jun-21
PER81707	Pegasus Insecticide (DIAFENTHIURON) / Nursery Stock / Aphids, Mites and Whitefly	Group 12A	30-Jun-21
PER81707	Pest Oil (PETROLEUM OIL) Nursery stock (non-food)/ Aphids, Leafhoppers, Mites, Scale and Thrips	N/A	30-Jun-21

Permit Number	Permit Description	Mode of Action Group	Expiration
PER90148	Pristine Fungicide (BOSCALID + PYRACLOSTROBIN)/Nursery Stock (Nonfood)/Anthracnose, Botrytis, Leaf Spot, Powdery Mildew	Group 11/7	31-Jul-21
PER81707	Proclaim Insecticide (EMAMECTIN) / Nursery stock (non-food) / Diamondback moth, loopers, green mirid, mites, cluster caterpillar, Heliothis, lightbrown apple moth	Group 6A	30-Jun-21
PER81707	PyGanic Organic Insecticide (PYRETHRINS) Nursery stock (nonstock)/Greenhouse Thrips, Diamondback moth, Cluster caterpillar, Heliothis & Lightbrown apple moth	Group 3A	30-Jun-21
PER87173	Quali-Pro Evolution Fungicide (azoxystrobin + tebuconazole) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food), Cut Flowers and Ornamentals / Anthracnose, Leaf mould, Myrtle rust, Powdery mildew, Rhizoctonia and Sclerotinia	Group 3/11 Fungicide	31-Mar-24
PER84707	Ranman 400 SC (cyazofamid) / nursery stock (non-food) and fruit trees (no-bearing) / Pythium, Phytophthora, Downy mildew)	Group 21 Fungicide	31-Mar-23
PER81707	Regent 200SC Insecticide plus Instar Granular (FIPRONIL) Nursery stock (nonfood)/Ants, Cutworms/Wireworms, Earwigs, Fungus gnats/Sciarid flies, Root mealybug, Scarab beetles, Sugar cane weevil borer, Symphylids, Termites and Thrips	Group 2B	30-Jun-21
PER90148	Ridomil Gold MZ – (MANCOZEB + METALAXYL) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food)/ Alternaria, Anthracnose, Septoria Leaf Spot & Phytophthora	Group 4/M3	31-Jul-21
PER85010	Spinner Turf (cyantraniliprole + thiamethoxam) / nursery stock (non-food) and fruit trees t(no-bearing) / Beetle larvae, weevil larvae, armyworm, cutworm	Group 4A 28 Insecticide	28-Feb-23
PER87433	Success Neo Insecticide (spinetoram) /nursery Stock (non-food) – Cut Flowers, Foliage and Ornamentals / Psyllids and Thrips	Group 5 Insecticide	30-Apr-22
PER81707	Suscon Maxi Controlled Release Insecticide (IMIDACLOPRID) / Nursery Stock (Non-Food) / Various Insects	Group 4A	30-Jun-21
PER90148	Switch Fungicide (CYPRODINIL + FLUDIOXONIL)/Nursery S Stock (Nonfood)/Rhizoctonia, Sclerotinia, Botrytis, Colletotrichum, Aspergillus	Group 12/9	31-Jul-21
PER85011	Transform (sulfoxaflor) / nursery stock (non-food) and fruit trees (no-bearing) / aphids, mealybugs, mirids, scale, greenhouse whitefly	Group 4C Insecticide	28-Feb-23
PER87434	Transform Insecticide (Sulfoxaflor)/ Nursery Stock (Non-Food), Cut Flowers and Ornamentals / Psyllids and Stink bugs	Group 4C Insecticide	30-Apr-22
PER90148	TRIADIMENOL, TRIFORINE, MANCOZEB, AZOXYSTROBIN, COPPER OXYCHLORIDE, OXYCARBOXIN AND PROPICONAZOLE / Nursery Stock (Nonfood), Ornamentals and Cut Flowers / Myrtle Rust (Uredo Rangelii)	Various	31-Jul-21

#### TABLE 2: MUPS HELD BY OTHER PARTIES RELEVANT TO NURSERY STOCK

Permit Number	Active	Pest(s) / Disease(s)	Expiration
PER9795	Various (WA Nursery stock entry condition)	WA Quarantine treatment	31 Mar 2027
PER9796	BIFENTHRIN	WA Quarantine treatment	31 Jul 2027
PER10043	BIFENTHRIN Insecticide	WA Quarantine treatment	31 Jul 2027
PER12073	CYFLUTHRIN Insecticide	Red Imported Fire Ant & Tropical Fire Ant (QLD)	30 Apr 2025

Permit Number	Active	Pest(s) / Disease(s)	Expiration
PER12491	MALDISON (MALATHION)	Australian Plague locust	31 Jul 2023
PER13059	ABAMECTIN, CLOFENTEZINE, AMITRAZ	Citrus Red Mite (NSW)	30 Sep 2025
PER13504	CHLORPYRIFOS Insecticide	Red Imported Fire Ants (QLD)	30 Sep 2027
PER13706	IMIDACLOPRID	Aconophora compressa (QLD)	31 Mar 2023
PER13916	BIFENTHRIN (Brigade) Insecticide	Red Imported Fire Ant (NSW)	31 Mar 2025
PER13959	BIFENTHRIN (Brigade) Insecticide	Red Imported Fire Ant (QLD)	31 Mar 2023
PER14256	CHLORPYRIFOS Insecticide (SuSCon Green)	Red Imported Fire Ants (QLD)	30 Sep 2025
PER14964	CHLOROTHALONIL Fungicide	Anthracnose (Lettuce seedlings)	30-Nov-2022
PER80719	SPINOSAD (Naturalure Fruit Fly Bait Concentrate)	Mediterranean & Queensland Fruit Fly	31 Mar 2025
PER84229	ABAMECTIN, BIFENTHRIN, METHOMYL	Tomato Potato Psyllid (Bactericera cockerelli)	31 Mar 2025
PER84951	Herbicides – Roundup (glyphosate), Basta (glufosinate), Goal (oxyfluorfen), Spray.Seed (paraquat + diquat), Gesatop (simazine) / nursery stock (non-food), foliage and cut flowers including wildflowers /various annual, perennial and woody weeds	Range of annual, perennial and woody weeds, broadleaf and grass weeds (as per label)	31 Dec 2022
PER84952	Fungicides – Ecocarb (potassium bicarbonate) Basta and Filan (boscalid) / nursery stock (non- food), foliage and cut flowers including wildflowers / various diseases	Ink Disease (Alternaria alternate) Botrytis, Powdery mildew	28 Feb 2023
PER84953	Various (Azadirachtin, Chlorpyrifos, Methomyl, Pirimicarb, Methoxyfenozide) – nursery stock, cutflowers, foliage	Aphids, Green vegetable bug, Lepidopteran larvae and scale insects, Psyllids, Stem borers, Thrips, Brown Marmorated Stink Bug	30 Nov 2022



This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au



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## What's Growing On?

## GREENER SPACES BETTER PLACES



Greener Spaces Better Places is a national initiative that brings together government, universities, business and industry to increase and improve green space in our towns and cities.

#### WHERE WILL ALL THE TREES BE?

Last year Greener Spaces Better Places launched Where Will All the Trees Be? (bit.ly/2PrBawx)—the only national canopy benchmarking report. The report identifies the latest snapshot on the state of urban greening across the country—but more importantly, it identifies where green cover is decreasing and increasing, and sets out the trends since 2013.

The research establishes six kinds of urban 'place', i.e., local government area (LGA) distinguished by rainfall, density and urbanisation, and nominates a best on-ground 'place' for each category that other, similar LGAs can learn from as they seek to grow their green cover.

#### WHAT NOW?

Phase 2 of this research is a deep dive into the findings of the national LGA survey results undertaken across 131 urban councils to drill down into what is and what isn't working on the urban forestry front. Our researchers surveyed 169 people whose job it is to green our cities at the local council level to learn more about the influence of local government on greening outcomes through policies, resourcing, community engagement and 'effort'. This included council planners, arborists, landscape architects, engineers, parks teams and sustainability officers from each of the urban LGAs in Australia. A report on this phase will be launching soon.

#### **WHAT'S NEXT?**

Greener Spaces Better Places will be hosting a series of online workshops to bring to life the research findings by place type, and to find out what solutions are out there and better understand what support is needed.

No one council can solve the urban greening challenges in isolation, so Greener Spaces Better Places is joining forces with councils and industry to crowdsource and scale up solutions to the challenges presented by the research findings.

The purpose of this workshop series is to:	Which maps well against the recent NGINA member survey regarding the most important services:	
Identify opportunities for the development of supporting tools and collective advocacy leverage for industry to take to government	Advocacy and representation at state and national levels	
Empower councils, community leaders and practitioners to better engage and gain leverage with their local communities to get improved green space outcomes	Professional development through educational courses (training in person)	
Provide the opportunity for attendees to network among themselves to share skills, ideas and implementation of urban forestry tools	Networking events 61%	

#### WHEN?

Keep an eye out for online workshop dates in NGINA's eNews or sign up for green space news at greenerspacesbetterplaces.com.au.

## Welcome to **Our New Members**

Business owners: Anni Yip & Danny Xie

Business name: Adds Decor Pty Ltd

(Acorn Garden Centre)

Address: 229 Brisbane Water Drive, Point Clare, NSW

2250

Business phone: 0424 878 922

Business email: addsdecor@yahoo.com.au

Nursery size (acres): 1500 m2

Number of staff: 5

Website: acorngardencentre.com.au Facebook: @AcornGardenCentre

Instagram: @acorngardencentre







Anni and Danny first ventured into business in 2009. It was a humble beginning, focusing mainly on designing ceramic pots, which were to be made in an uncle's factory and distributed throughout China. It didn't take long for the pots to gain in popularity and soon they were exported all over the world including the US, the UK and Australia.

In 2017, the family immigrated to Australia and established Adds Decor Pty Ltd. With a love for the natural world the family purchased Acorn Garden Centre in Point Clare on the Central Coast, NSW.

Acorn Garden Centre has been trading at Point Clare since 1975. Its premises are a large barn-style building, which has a somewhat interesting past—originally built and used as a plasterboard factory, in the 70s the building was converted and used as an art and gift gallery, which also sold a small selection of plants that were grown on site. The closure of the gallery made way for a quaint plant nursery and Acorn Garden Centre was born.

Over the years, just like a growing tree, Acorn Garden Centre became larger, spreading its branches and settling its roots deep in the local community. Acorn has been servicing the Central Coast with plants, garden supplies and advice for over 40 years. (There's even been a fully equipped aquarium department, with over 40 fish tanks, featuring more than one hundred species of temperate and tropical fish.) Anni says she is grateful to have inherited the business from the previous owners who, over an eight-year period, succeeded at operating an award-winning business, loved by many local gardeners.

With a background in international business and no prior experience in horticulture, Anni's biggest challenge has been starting from scratch in the nursery and garden industry. She





Anni Yip

says, "The study of horticulture is not easy but I find it to be an interesting and rewarding endeavour. I'm learning more and more every day and with the help of a fantastic team the business continues to thrive."

Within the first year of trading as Acorn Garden Centre it became evident customers were not only coming to the garden centre looking for plants but also for interesting and decorative pots that could be styled within their homes. Thanks to Anni's experience within the international market, the opportunity presented itself to begin designing and sourcing unique pots and planters to service Acorn Garden Centre's local customers. From 2018, she began to import pots directly from China.

The pots and planters provided a point of difference for Acorn Garden Centre and were very well received by customers. Over a two-year period Anni trialled a number of different styles of pots, planters and plant stands. With customer feedback she was able to modify the designs to cater for the modern



plant lover. One of the best-selling styles is the woven planters with wooden feet. Anni was able to revise the design of these planters to include a plastic lining that helps protect flooring and furniture in an indoor setting.

Alongside woven standing planters, Anni has a range of classic pots with saucers, quirky pots—including animal planters, mermaid planters and face/head planters—metal stands, hanging pots and balcony pot holders, and artificial succulents. All of which have been tried, tested and were a great success at Acorn Garden Centre.

In 2021, Anni decided it was time to expand their offering into the wholesale market. Anni is thrilled to now be a member of the NGINA community and have the opportunity to showcase her products at Sydney Trade Day throughout 2021. Her goal is to provide good quality, trending and well-thought-out pots and planters to the Australian market and become a recognised brand within the industry. She looks forward to seeing you all at the next Trade Day!





## Welcome to **Our New Members**



Business owners: Phillip McAllister and Adrian Sendt

**Business name:** Plantsporters Address: Riverstone, NSW 2765 Business phone: 0411 428 955

Business email: plantsporters@gmail.com

Website: plantsporters.com.au

Plantsporters became a member of NGINA in October last year, and both Phil and Adrian have attended a number of Sydney trade days since then. We caught up with Phil to find out a bit more about the history behind Plantsporters.

"Having been a keen furniture removalist with a forklift licence and an HR truck licence, I challenged myself and started providing greenlife freight across greater Sydney in October 2019. It was a great opportunity to take on a new venture and build something for myself. I look after all aspects of the business and really enjoy getting out and building healthy relationships with my customers.

Plantsporters has access to a fleet of trucks—flatbeds, pantechs and tautliners—that cover all aspects of freight. We can freight pallets, trees, pots, plants... anything really! We also specialise in jobs that simply require heavy lifting and fork lifting.

We currently cover all of greater Sydney but are looking to expand into areas such as the north/south coast and more regional areas that are in need of freight. Even now I am always open to a call to see if I can arrange freight or work something out for all my customers."

We asked Phil why he thought his customers pick Plantsporters over any of his competitors. "I would like to think customers pick me because of the extra care I put in that plants need, such as overnight storage and unforeseen hot weather conditions. My warehouse is equipped with a watering system and air conditioning to keep plants happy during hot days and nights. Not only that but all plants are freighted with extra care. Not every plant/tree can be



Phil at Sydney Trade Day in March



Phil



Plantsporters truck

strapped or freighted the exact same way."

Phil's biggest challenge is finding suppliers in need of Plantsporters' service, however, he says word of mouth has been great over the last few months.

When asked about his philosophy or a saying that motivates him every day, Phil said, "Attitude is everything and influential to the people around you. Always bring your best attitude and good days and people will find you.

## Welcome to **Our New Members**



Business owners: Simone Ackley & Brent Paynter

Business name: Spires Wholesale Nursery (registered

business name: Spires Plant & Propagation)

Address: 1018 Willina Road, Bunyah, NSW 2429

Business phone: Simone 0424 680 382/

Brent 0413 436 129

Business email: spiresnursery@gmail.com

Nursery size (acres): 3 acres established out of 40

acres

Number of staff: 2

Spires Wholesale Nursery, located in Bunyah (near Forster), became a member of NGINA in January this year. Still in its infancy (only six months old), we caught up with Simone for a bit of a Q&A session.

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

I finished my HSC and then spent over 10 years working in office/administration roles. However, I've always had a passion for plants and gardening, so I decided to study horticulture through TAFE NSW at Ryde and get my qualifications so that I could obtain work in the industry. Brent started as a nursery hand in 1989, and has continued to work in both retail and wholesale throughout the years.

#### WHAT DREW YOU TO THE INDUSTRY?

The love of plants and gardening, we are both very passionate about gardening and growing plants, we have an extensive garden that we are always working on and expanding, it's a labour of love.

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

I have worked in both wholesale and retail nurseries, in Camden, the Central Coast and now the Mid North Coast. My first job after TAFE was propagating at Downes Wholesale





Brent and Simone

Nursery, Theresa Park, back in early 2000. Brent started in the industry at a very early age, helping in the family retail business on the Central Coast, Karalta Road Nursery.

#### HOW DID YOU GET YOUR IDEA OR CONCEPT FOR SPIRES WHOLESALE NURSERY?

Our business idea came from a gap in the market in our local area—there was a shortage of stock available. So, we decided to help supply our local area.

#### WHAT WAS YOUR MISSION AT THE OUTSET?

To provide quality plant stock to retail nurseries.

Provide a bit of business background

We are a very newly established business, only about six months old. Brent and I are both hands on in all aspects of production, sales and admin.

#### WHAT PRODUCTS DO YOU OFFER/ **MANUFACTURE?**

Our business offers 'shop ready' quality plant stock from 100 ml through to 300 ml size.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR COMPANY'S GOALS?

Quality! Quality! Everything should fall into place after that.

#### DO YOU WORK LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, **INTERNATIONALLY?**

Our current size demands we work locally.

#### WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE YOUR CURRENT LOCATION?

Price and land availability. Climate was also a key factor as we have a long growing season here.

#### WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS?

I would say its size and location, there is nothing like this in our immediate area. We also have many years of combined







experience in both wholesale and retail. Having stepped away from the industry for some years this has allowed us to approach it with fresh eyes.

#### **CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CUSTOMERS?**

Our customers are primarily retail nurseries, servicing our local area from Port Macquarie down to the Central Coast.

#### WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR CUSTOMERS SELECT YOU OVER YOUR COMPETITORS?

We are still working at building our customer base but we provide an old-school approach of visiting their nurseries regularly to showcase our stock. We also aim to provide prompt delivery to service our customer needs as quickly as possible.

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

Being a new player in a long-established industry that has suffered drought, as well as competition from large chain stores.

#### WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THESE CHALLENGES?

Perseverance, you have to keep pounding the pavement and work hard at establishing customer relations.

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

In one year, we hope to have a good client base with steady consistent orders. In 5-10 years we would like to have expanded the size of our operation, have added staff to our team of two, extended the range of products we offer, and be able to maintain the personal approach to our business.

#### WHAT'S YOUR PHILOSOPHY OR SAYING THAT MOTIVATES YOU IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

Because of our retail experience we understand what nurseries need. Our saying is that we are 'shop ready'—our stock needs to be retail ready and looking its best before it leaves us.

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

The people are awesome, always happy to help and support, and always willing to share knowledge. It is very satisfying to grow good quality plant stock and offer this to our customers.

#### TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS?

We will let you know when we get there!! Only time will tell.

Does your company help the community where it is located?

Some of the nurseries we supply have an aged population as customers, they still love their gardening the old-fashioned way and it's nice to supply them with the plant stock they require.

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

Developing and growing plants is very rewarding—to take a small cutting and watch it grow into a saleable plant, through your own hard work and nurturing is quite an achievement. Multiply that small cutting by hundreds, and then see that stock being sold on in retail nurseries is very rewarding. The people in the industry are always a pleasure to spend time with. Being an industry at the mercy of the elements has its challenges.

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

Seek advice... most people in the industry are happy to give it, and prepare yourself for a lot of long hours and hard work.

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

Recently we had to acquire the assistance of two of our cattle farming neighbours and their tractors to help pull out a rather large semi-trailer from our front paddock that got stuck delivering potting mix after some recent rain... it was touch and go there for a while but we can laugh about it now! I am forever grateful to our neighbours; we are very lucky to have such good ones.



## **NGINA Board Insights**

by Nichole Roberts, NGINA Director and Owner of Wyee Nursery and Wyee Landscape Supplies

There is so much happening in the industry and your Board of Directors is working hard in the background to ensure our industry thrives and grows.

I personally feel fortunate and proud to be part of a team that is so passionate about contributing and adding value to the success of our industry.

Each of the Directors has been assigned a portfolio that aligns with the four pillars of the 'NGINA Strategic Plan 2020-2023':

- 1. Membership services
- 2. Professional development
- 3. Advocacy
- 4. Association sustainability

My portfolio is Training & Professional Development and it gives me great pleasure to report on all the activities undertaken within this portfolio over the last few months.

At the beginning of December I attended NGINA HQ in Kenthurst to discuss the portfolio with Anita (NGINA CEO) and Kim (NGINA Events Coordinator), and to formulate an action plan with a view to contacting industry representatives to form a Training & Professional Development Committee and relaunch the NGINA NextGen Program.



#### **TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMEN**

The Training & Professional Development Committee comprises a very impressive calibre of people, all truly looking to the future of our industry: Anita Campbell (NGINA CEO), Malcom Calder (NGINA President), Daniel Ewings (Alpine Nurseries), Peter Thorburn (Honeysuckle Nurseries), Stephen Rixon (TAFE NSW), Marc Patterson (Kenthurst Nursery), Mal Morgan (Glenfield Wholesale Nursery), Sonja Cameron (Cameron's Nursery), Ben Grange (Grange Growing Solutions) and, of course, myself.

The first meeting was held on 24 February we covered off the following:

- We discussed establishing a Committee Charter.
- We heard from a guest speaker from the Centre of

Excellence in Agricultural Education who explained about the vertical garden competition.

- Anita gave a PowerPoint presentation around industry statistics, the careers pathway project, NGINA's strategic plan, the apprenticeship training system and available courses.
- Steve Rixon (Richmond TAFE) updated us on statewide apprentice numbers and the Federal Government's Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement Scheme.
- An update was given on NGINA's 'Introduction to Basic Horticulture' workshops that are being run in greater Sydney schools.
- Future courses to be run by NGINA.

#### **NEXTGEN COMMITTEE UPDATE**

We've relaunched our NextGen Program, which originally started in NSW over 15 years ago. As well as myself, committee members include: Anita Campbell, Ben Grange, Caitlin Desmond (Ozbreed), Tahnee Moors (Alpine Nurseries), Jack Thorburn (Honeysuckle Park), Jon Philliponi (Andreasens Green) and Amanda Marsh (Desert Sunday Collective).

We've had a NextGen logo developed, courtesy of Amanda, and frequently catch up via WhatsApp.

Our first event was held on 18 March, and a full event wrap-up can be found on pages 16-18. Our next event will be held in June and details will be published soon.









#### **NGINA BOARD**

In addition to what's been going on in my own portfolio the Board has already had two meetings this year—one in February and one in March.

The Board meeting in March was held at Go Grow in the Northern Rivers region (which I attended via Zoom) and was followed by a visit to the Northern Rivers Trade Day in the morning.

Some interesting insights from the Board meeting:

- From a retail perspective there is a good level of optimism for the industry, with the increased interest in gardening from consumers seeming to be ongoing.
- The Incentives for Australian Apprenticeships (IAA) will now commence from 1 July 2021, replacing the existing Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP).
- With regards to the NGINA's strategic plan, the Directors have been requested to review it in conjunction with individual portfolios and prioritise objectives within their own portfolio for achievement within the 2021 year.
- The President of NGINA, Malcolm Calder, is in constant contact with NGI associations nationwide.



- The Vice President of NGINA, David Jakobs, provided an insight into business conditions after half-yearly results were published by key retail industries.
- Director for Membership Services, David Cliffe, gave an overview of the Government's attention to reducing greenhouse emissions via storing carbon in soil.
- Director for Marketing & Communications, Samantha Birkwood, provided an overview of business conditions in the region and provided a useful link (app.remplan.com. au) for exploring the economy and forecasting industries.
- Director Robert Love provided the Treasurer's report.

I'd like to wish everyone a fantastic Autumn for 2021. Cheers and happy growing.

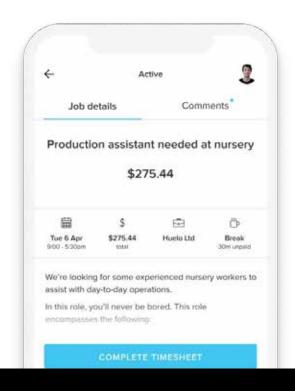




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