



NGINA PLANT OF THE YEAR

2025 Award Judging Criteria and Guidelines

Eligibility

- Open to all plants and cultivars not previously entered into the NGINA Plant of the Year.
- Applications accepted from breeders, nurseries, growers, or businesses that hold rights to the plant or have written authorisation from the owner (authorisation form provided in application pack).
- Applicants must be members of the NGINA
- Plant must be commercially available for sale within 6 months of the award announcement and must have been released with the last two years (from application date).
- Entries must include at least one NSW or ACT distributor or retailer relationship (to support regional relevance).

Award Objectives

This award recognises a plant that demonstrates excellence in commercial potential, innovation, aesthetics, performance, and contribution to the nursery and garden industry. The winning plant will exemplify traits that excite consumers, support the industry, and demonstrate leadership in sustainability, resilience, and market alignment.

Judging Criteria and Weighting

Category	Description	Weighting
Commercial Potential	Alignment with current market demand; scalability in production and retail; clear target audience; clear price positioning; marketing strategies that set it apart.	20%
Innovation	Novel traits (compactness, colour, form, fragrance, fruiting, etc.); pest/disease resistance; climate resilience; sustainability (e.g., peat-free, recyclable packaging); originality as a new cultivar or species.	20%
Aesthetics and Sensory Appeal	Overall visual impact: colour vibrancy, unique patterns, longevity; form and habit; texture; scent or tactile features; photographed or presented across sites/seasons.	20%
Performance and Resilience	Reliable performance under diverse conditions; minimal input requirements (water, fertiliser, chemicals); adaptability to environmental stresses (drought, shade, soil conditions); pest and disease resistance, supported by evidence or trials.	20%
Recreational/Educational Value	Value to home gardeners, landscapers, public spaces, schools, or botanic gardens; potential to inspire educational initiatives or community projects; relevance for sustainability education or biodiversity promotion.	10%
Evidence and Testing	Quality and breadth of supporting evidence, including independent trial results, testimonials, retail performance data, marketing reach, breeder background, and sustainability credentials.	10%

Application Requirements

Applicants must submit:

- Completed application form.
- Photographic portfolio showing the plant in different environments and seasons.
- Description of breeder/origin story, traits, and innovation.
- Evidence of commercial potential (retail uptake, customer interest, marketing examples).
- Documentation of performance and resilience (trial data, independent testing where available).
- Optional: short video (2-3 minutes) showcasing the plant in action.
- Pay a \$250 including GST application fee

Judging Process

- **Stage 1 – Review:** Judges review applications independently using a standardised scoring sheet aligned to the criteria.
- **Stage 2 – Panel Discussion:** Judges meet to discuss top-scoring entries, resolve scoring discrepancies, and determine finalists.
- **Stage 3 – Final Selection:** Finalists are assessed with input from industry stakeholders (e.g., retailers, landscapers) where appropriate.
- **Optional Public Engagement:** A People's Choice vote may be run to generate public excitement (non-binding to formal judging outcome).

Judging Panel

The judging panel will include:

- Horticultural experts (e.g., breeders, production specialists).
- Retail and landscaping professionals.
- Marketing and consumer trends specialist.
- Sustainability or biosecurity expert (optional, depending on entry pool).

Judge biographies will be published to ensure transparency.

Award Benefits

- Official title of **NGINA Plant of the Year 2025**.
- Featured promotion through NGINA social media, website, newsletters, and Sydney Trade Day.
- Press release template and media support.
- Profile article in N&G News Magazine.
- Option to display winning plant at key events and expos.

Judges' Scoring Matrix

Category	Judging Breakdown	Max Points
Commercial Potential (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market relevance and consumer appeal (5 points) - Strength of demand and fit to NSW/ACT market (5 points) - Pricing fit and retail scalability (2 points) - Production scalability and supply chain readiness (4 points) - Marketing strategy strength (4 points) 	20
Innovation (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Originality as a new cultivar or species (5 points) - Introduction of unique plant traits (compactness, colour, disease resistance) (5 points) - Breeder origin story and documented development (5 points) - Innovative uses or applications (5 points) 	20
Aesthetics & Sensory Appeal (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual impact: colour vibrancy, patterns, longevity (5 points) - Form, habit, texture, or scent appeal (5 points) - Uniqueness in appearance or sensory features (5 points) - Supporting photo evidence across seasons and sites (5 points) 	20
Performance & Resilience (20 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistent establishment and long-term growth (5 points) - Low-input requirements (water, nutrition, maintenance) (5 points) - Adaptability to environmental stresses (drought, shade, salinity, etc.) (5 points) 	20

	- Pest and disease resistance, backed by evidence (5 points)	
Recreational/Educational Value (10 points)	- Value to home gardeners, public spaces, or schools (4 points) - Educational potential for botanic gardens or horticulture programs (3 points) - Contribution to sustainability or biodiversity awareness (3 points)	10
Evidence Quality (10 points)	- Strength and clarity of submitted evidence (3 points) - Presence of independent testing or trials (3 points) - Quality of visuals, documentation, and marketing materials (4 points)	10
TOTAL SCORE		100

Judging Instructions:

- Judges will score each sub-section individually, adding up to the category total.
- Written comments should be provided for high or low scores to explain decisions.
- Judges will meet after independent scoring to review top-ranked entries and finalise winners.
- Any judge with a conflict of interest must declare it and abstain from scoring that plant.