



# PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

## 2025 Award Judging Criteria and Guidelines

### Eligibility

- Open to all horticultural and garden-related products not previously entered into the NGINA Product of the Year.
- Applications accepted from manufacturers, suppliers, or distributors with rights to the product or written authorisation from the owner (authorisation form provided in application pack). Note: Open only to NGINA Members
- Product 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 availability to NSW and ACT markets.

### Award Objectives

This award recognises an outstanding product that delivers innovation, commercial appeal, functionality, sustainability, and value to the nursery and garden industry. The winning product will stand out for its potential to improve business operations, enhance consumer experience, or elevate industry standards.

## Judging Criteria and Weighting

Category	Description	Weighting
Commercial Potential	Market demand; scalability in production and distribution; clear target audience; pricing competitiveness; innovative marketing strategies.	20%
Innovation	Unique features, design, or functionality; introduction of new technologies or processes; originality or improvements over existing products.	20%
Functionality and Performance	Practicality, user-friendliness, durability, effectiveness in delivering intended outcomes; evidence of consistent performance in different environments or use cases.	20%
Sustainability	Use of sustainable materials or processes; contribution to environmental responsibility (e.g., recyclable packaging, low-carbon production, energy efficiency); alignment with circular economy principles.	20%
Industry Impact and Value	Benefits to nurseries, retailers, landscapers, or consumers; potential for improving operational efficiency, reducing costs, enhancing customer satisfaction, or contributing to workforce development or education.	10%
Evidence and Supporting Data	Strength and breadth of supporting materials, including independent testing results, testimonials, sales data, marketing campaigns, certifications, or endorsements.	10%

## Application Requirements

Applicants must submit:

- Completed application form.
- Product description including features, functions, and intended use.
- Description of innovation or improvement over market alternatives.
- Evidence of commercial potential (sales data, retail uptake, marketing examples).
- Documentation of performance (test results, user feedback, testimonials).
- Sustainability claims supported by evidence.

- Photographic portfolio and optional short video (2–3 minutes) demonstrating the product in use.
- Pay application fee of \$250 including GST

## Judging Process

- **Stage 1 – Review:** Judges score applications independently using a standardised scoring matrix.
- **Stage 2 – Panel Discussion:** Judges meet to discuss top-scoring entries, resolve discrepancies, and select finalists.
- **Stage 3 – Final Selection:** Finalists undergo additional review or stakeholder input where appropriate.
- **Optional Public Engagement:** A People’s Choice vote may be included for additional promotion (non-binding to judging outcome).

## Judging Panel

The judging panel will include:

- Product design or manufacturing expert.
- Nursery or retail industry specialist.
- Marketing or consumer behaviour specialist.
- Sustainability or environmental expert.

## Award Benefits

- Official title of **NGINA Product of the Year 2025**.
- Featured promotion through NGINA social media, website, newsletters, and Sydney Trade Day.
- Press release and media support package.
- Feature article in N&G News Magazine.
- Opportunity to showcase the product at key events and expos.

## Judges’ Scoring Matrix

Category	What Judges Will Assess	Score Range
<b>Commercial Potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market relevance (5 points)</li> <li>- Strength of demand and fit to NSW/ACT (5 points)</li> <li>- Pricing fit for target audience (2 points)</li> <li>- Scalability in production/distribution (4 points)</li> </ul>	/20

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marketing strategies and sales success (4 points)</li> </ul> <p><i>They will look for evidence of real-world sales success, retailer feedback, or consumer demand signals (such as pre-orders or expressions of interest).</i></p>	
<b>Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Originality vs competitors (5 points)</li> <li>- Use of new materials, technology, or design (5 points)</li> <li>- Documented R&amp;D, patents, or innovations (5 points)</li> <li>- Improvements over existing products (5 points)</li> </ul>	/20
<b>Functionality &amp; Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effectiveness in intended use (5 points)</li> <li>- User-friendliness and practicality (5 points)</li> <li>- Reliability and durability (5 points)</li> <li>- Independent testing, trials, comparative performance (5 points)</li> </ul> <p><i>They will consider evidence from independent testing, user trials, or testimonials, plus any comparative data against competitor products.</i></p>	/20
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of sustainable materials/processes (5 points)</li> <li>- Packaging recyclability or eco-design (5 points)</li> <li>- Manufacturing/resource efficiency (5 points)</li> <li>- Circular economy alignment or sustainability certifications (5 points)</li> </ul> <p><i>Products backed by third-party certifications, measurable sustainability claims, or lifecycle assessments will score more highly.</i></p>	/20
<b>Industry Impact &amp; Value</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Benefit to nurseries, retailers, landscapers, or consumers (3 points)</li> <li>- Operational efficiency and cost reductions (3 points)</li> <li>- Contribution to industry innovation or education (4 points)</li> </ul> <p><i>Special credit will go to products that support industry innovation, create new market opportunities, or promote education or sustainability practices within the sector.</i></p>	/10
<b>Evidence Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strength and clarity of evidence (3 points)</li> <li>- Independent validation or testing (3 points)</li> <li>- Quality of visuals, documentation, and marketing materials (4 points)</li> </ul>	/10

	<i>Comprehensive, well-documented, and independently verified evidence will be given higher scores, as it increases the confidence in product claims.</i>	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>/100</b>

### Judging Instructions:

- Judges will independently score each section on a scale (0–20 or 0–10) according to the provided descriptions.
- Scores should reflect how strongly the product meets or exceeds expectations in each category, relative to other entries.
- Judges will provide short written comments in each category to explain high or low scores.
- Once individual scoring is complete, the panel will meet to discuss the top-ranked entries, align final scores where discrepancies exist, and select the winner.
- Judges will recuse themselves from scoring any product where they have a conflict of interest.