



N&G NEWS


Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT



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In This Issue | Summer 2020-21

- 4** Events Calendar 2021
- 5** Training Calendar 2021
- 6** President's Report
- 8** CEO's Report
- 9** BTSM's Report
- 12** NGINA Strategic Plan 2020–2023
- 15** NGINA's Industry Awards 2020
- 25** Scotts Tubes Take Home the Win
- 26** Jon Philliponi — Industry Bloomer of the Year 2020
- 28** Best Retail Nursery of the Year Award
- 30** NGINA Bridges the Gap Between Industry, Educators and Students
- 32** How to Make the Most of Your Apprentice Training
- 34** Serpentine Leafminer: This Plant Industry Pest Arrives in Australia
- 36** Bunnings Responds to Concerns Regarding 'Terms of Trade' for Small Suppliers
- 38** Phishing — Securing Your Personal and Banking Details From Hackers
- 39** Be Green With Your Energy
- 40** Protecting Pesticides From People
- 42** Welcome to Our New Members — Essentially Natural
- 44** Welcome to Our New Members — Desert Sunday



15



26



32



38



36

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Front Cover: NGINA's industry award winners 2020



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Events Calendar 2021

January

Wednesday 20 | Sydney Trade Day

February

Wednesday 3 | Northern Rivers Group Event

Thursday 4 | Board Meeting

Tuesday 9 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 17 | Sydney Trade Day

March

Thursday 4 | Central Coast Group Event

Monday 8 | Northern Rivers Group Event

Monday 8 | Board Meeting at Northern Rivers

Tuesday 9 | Northern Rivers Trade Day

Tuesday 9 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 17 | Sydney Trade Day

Thursday 18 | Next Gen Event

April

Tuesday 13 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 14 | Sydney Trade Day

May

Thursday 6 | Central Coast Group Event

Tuesday 11 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 19 | Sydney Trade Day

Wednesday 26 | Board Meeting

Wednesday 26 | Pioneers' Lunch

June

Tuesday 8 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 16 | Sydney Trade Day

Thursday 24 | Next Gen Event

July

Thursday 1 | Central Coast Group Bus Tour

Tuesday 13 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 14 | Board Meeting in Canberra

Wednesday 21 | Sydney Trade Day

August

Tuesday 10 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 18 | Sydney Trade Day

Monday 30 | Board Meeting at Port Macquarie

Tuesday 31 | Port Macquarie Trade Day

September

Tuesday 7 | Northern Rivers Trade Day

Tuesday 14 | Spring Trade Day Dinner

Tuesday 14 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 15 | Sydney Trade Day

Thursday 16 | Next Gen Event

October

Thursday 7 | Central Coast Group Event

Tuesday 12 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 14 | Board Meeting

Wednesday 20 | Sydney Trade Day

November

Tuesday 9 | Dubbo Trade Day

Wednesday 17 | Sydney Trade Day

December

Friday 3 | NGINA AGM

Friday 3 | Industry Awards & Gala Dinner

Thursday 9 | Central Coast Group Christmas Party

Tuesday 14 | Dubbo Trade Day

Tuesday 14 | Board Meeting

Wednesday 15 | Sydney Trade Day

Thursday 16 | Next Gen Event



Training Calendar 2021

January

Wednesday 20 | AgChem | Brisbane

Friday 29 | Chemcert AQF111 | Central Coast

February

Wednesday 10 | ChemcertAQF111 | Kenthurst

Thursday 25 | First Aid | Kenthurst

April

Thursday 15 | First Aid | Central Coast

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

Thursday 29 | ChemCert | Kenthurst

May

Tuesday 4 | First Aid | Port Macquarie

Thursday 6 | Manual Handling | Port Macquarie

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

It has been amazing to spend time over Christmas with family and friends in as much a normal season as possible after the challenging year behind us.

The new year is always, for most of us, a time of optimism and hope as we set the course forward. Decisions we make and actions we take now, in this early part of the year, will effect the next 12 months and I am sure we all want to see success and progress.

NGINA was incorporated on 18 January 1973 and each year since, governing leaders and members have built what we have the privilege to be a part of today. The legacy and honour deservedly given to those who gave of themselves and their businesses is a powerful motivation for us as we work together in 2021.

We, as a staff and Board, are firmly on track. I love the old Will Rogers quote:

“Even if you are on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

We are all motivated to build the Association this year. The Directors each have set portfolios to provide leadership and actions. The valued staff have improved roles that reflect outcomes needed, and the CEO is firmly in place having built key relationships and gained a deep understanding of both our membership and our opportunities.

As a result of your engagement in the recent member survey, we have formed a strong, workable, achievable strategic plan that itemises your specific needs and requests. This plan covers four foundational areas:

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

I encourage members to read the plan and see what’s contained in it (you can find it on our website or contact NGINA HQ and ask for a copy to be emailed to you). There’s also more information on the strategic plan on pages 12–14.



Nurserymen in the 1940s



Some of our NGINA Board members and CEO in 2020 (with special guest Costa Georgiadis). From left to right: Robert Love, Malcolm Calder, Sam Birkwood, Costa Georgiadis, Anita Campbell, Nichole Roberts, David Jakobs and Andy Cameron

This year there are several communication platforms we will be utilising to keep in touch with our members:

1. eNews (emailed to you all fortnightly)
2. N&G News (our quarterly industry magazine available in both hard copy and online)
3. Website
4. Member forums
5. Trade days
6. Committee involvement in strategic areas
7. Regional groups and events
8. Surveys
9. Updates and milestones

10. Annual gala dinner and awards presentation night

The key to our growth and success will be the way we communicate with you and for you, as members, to communicate with us.

I'd like to thank you for your commitment to our industry within NSW and ACT.

“Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” Vince Lombardi.

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CEO's Report

by Anita Campbell, CEO, NGINA

Welcome to the first *N&G News* for 2021—a year that is already shaping up to be one of the best for the industry and for your industry association.

At the AGM in November last year we launched the 'NGINA Strategic Plan 2020–2023', which sets out a very ambitious plan to facilitate our members' success in growing their businesses in a profitable, efficient, responsible and environmentally safe manner through four main pillars: **membership services, professional development, advocacy** and **association sustainability**.

The plan, which is to be implemented over the next three years, includes ensuring the Association's sustainability. To do this we must become less reliant on the investment income and become self-funded.

The plan, therefore, includes measures to increase the Association's revenue through membership acquisition, a partnership program and increasing alternative revenue streams. Specific key performance indicators set out clear targets that are to be reached by the end of each year, up to and including 2023.

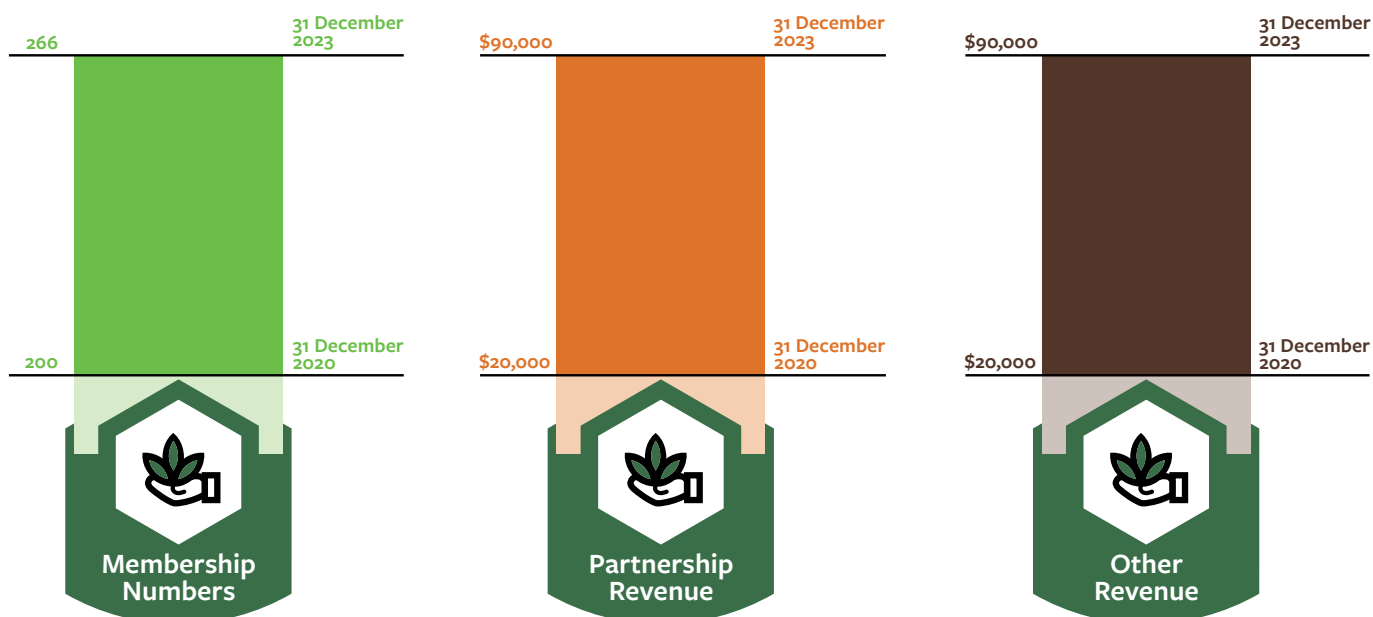
I will report on how we are tracking in each edition of this magazine by using the below three graphs.

One of the important topics raised by members at our AGM last year is what is happening to the investment and I was asked to report on this regularly to members. The property was sold in 2016 and \$9.7 million was deposited. The fund management was given to JB Were and despite the volatile markets in recent months the investment remains strong. This is managed carefully and wisely by our Investment Committee.

The total portfolio is currently valued at \$10.25 million.

Each year an amount has been withdrawn from the investment income to help with operational costs of the Association. In the financial year 2019/20, \$380,000 was withdrawn and the year before, \$680,000 was withdrawn. So far in this financial year (2020/21), \$250,000 has been withdrawn. Hopefully we will keep it well below what it has been in recent years.

I am also extremely proud to report on our progress on the



other three pillars contained within the strategic plan. Each of our directors has been allocated a portfolio and all have begun work in their areas.

The strategic plan calls on the reintroduction of the Next Gen program. You will find in the Events Calendar on page 4 the dates of the four Next Gen events this year. The Next Gen Committee will be co-chaired by last year's Industry Bloomer, Jon Philliponi, from Andreasens Green and the 2019 Industry Bloomer, Jack Thorburn, from Honeysuckle Garden.

On pages 30–31 you can read about how we are promoting horticulture education pathways to high school and TAFE students and on pages 32–33 you can read the second article in our series on apprenticeships.

As part of our commitment to increase our membership offering you will also notice a Training Calendar (page 5), which is current at the time of printing and further courses are to be added throughout the year. The calendar includes online and face-to-face training options in various centres throughout NSW and ACT, and across multiple disciplines. You can also find on page 39 information about an energy price comparison service being offered to our members from our good friends at Business Australia.

In each edition of *N&G News* I will report on our progress realising the KPIs in the strategic plan that relate to member numbers, partnership and alternative revenue, and let you know how your investment is performing.

You can read a summary of the strategic plan on pages 12–14.



BTSM's Report

by Craig Perring, Business & Technical Support Manager, NGINA

The end of the year came and went very quickly, and here we are in 2021! Hopefully we have a renewed vigour, the plants have had a chance to grow and all our new-found gardeners of 2020 are looking to buy lots more plants.

I met with Sydney Water in November to open up discussions around water restrictions and future-proofing our industry when faced with the next drought. Although discussions are still in the early stages, Sydney Water is certainly open to building a working relationship with NGINA. Newly appointed NGINA Board Director, Andy Cameron, will be leading the charge on water policy and it's anticipated this will be developed quickly. When it is, it will be shared with our members and other sectors so that together we can lobby government.

Since the appointment of Anita Campbell as CEO, my role has changed from Business & Technical Support Officer (BTSO) to Business & Technical Support Manager (BTSM). The new role continues to offer business and technical support, member liaison and representing the industry in the biosecurity, advocacy and lobbying space, but also has an added focus of business development—increasing member numbers, increasing member benefits and increasing third-

party partnerships.

Much of my focus in the last month has been on pulling together a business development plan that will ensure all members are visited, in person, during the calendar year, and that there is plenty of opportunity to visit and attract both new members and partners. The plan will be aligned to the 'NGINA Strategic Plan 2020–2023' to ensure fundamental KPIs are being met and it will go to the NGINA Board for approval at their next board meeting (February 2021).

It is with frustration that we have to learn to live with Serpentine leafminer (SLM).

The exotic pest was reported to the NSW DPI Exotic Plant Pest Hotline from a market garden situated in the peri-urban area of south western Sydney on 22 October 2020. Samples were collected and Serpentine leafminer (*Liriomyza huidobrensis*) was diagnosed on 28 October 2020.

NSW DPI and Local Land Services launched an emergency response that involved surveillance and tracing to determine the extent of the infestation. They identified infected premises included wholesale nurseries, market gardens and a retail nursery.

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests is Australia's key technical body for coordinating national responses to emergency plant pest incursions and assessing the technical feasibility for their eradication. The committee recommended that SLM is not technically feasible to eradicate due to the extent of the infestation and there's a need to implement management of the pest instead.

Management will focus on managing pathways of spread, abating domestic trade issues to retain market access, ensure control options are available and that industry is supported through the changes in required pest management to ensure business continuity. There is a large range of host plants and I strongly advise you visit the following link to see a list of what plants can be affected: bit.ly/3hjcjoj.

The following table provides a list of permits approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), to allow management of leafminers in some crops. APVMA will update this list as more permits or registered products become available.

Note: many permits are approved for crop groups (e.g., leafy vegetables or bulb vegetables). Specific crops covered by each crop group description can be checked at apvma.gov.au/crop-groups.

Martin Horwood, an Independent Entomological Consultant, has written an article for *N&G News* on the SLM, you will find this on pages 34–35.

H = harvest; G = grazing

Crop	Permit Number or Registration	Chemicals	Harvest Withholding Period (Days)	Mode of Action Group
Bulb onions	PER90387 PER81876v4	Cyantraniliprole Abamectin	7 30	28 Diamides 6 Avermectins
Bulb vegetables except bulb onions (including leeks, spring onions)	PER90387 PER81876v4	Cyantraniliprole Abamectin	7 14	28 Diamides 6 Avermectins
Brassica vegetables (including broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower)	PER87563	Emamectin (suppression only)	3	6 Avermectin
Broccoli (field and protected)	PER81867v2	Cyromazine	7	17 Cyromazine
Cabbage (head)	PER81876v4	Abamectin	7	6 Avermectins
Capsicum	PER90387 PER88640	Cyantraniliprole Spirotetramat (suppression only)	1 1	28 Diamides 23 Tetronic
Celery	PER88640 PER81876v4	Spirotetramat (suppression only) Abamectin	3 7	23 Tetronic 6 Avermectins
Chillies	PER90387 PER88640	Cyantraniliprole Spirotetramat (suppression only)	1 1	28 Diamides 23 Tetronic
Eggplant	PER90387 PER88640	Cyantraniliprole Spirotetramat (suppression only)	1 1	28 Diamides 23 Tetronic
Fruit trees (non-bearing)	PER83506	Cyromazine	NA	17 Cyromazine
Fruiting vegetables—cucurbits	PER90387 PER81867v2 PER81876v4	Cyantraniliprole Cyromazine Abamectin	1 7 7	28 Diamides 17 Cyromazine 6 Avermectins
Fruiting vegetables other than cucurbits (except sweetcorn and mushrooms)	PER90387 PER81876v4	Cyantraniliprole Abamectin	1 7	28 Diamides 6 Avermectins
Green beans	PER88640	Spirotetramat (suppression only)	H7 G7	23 Tetronic
Leafy vegetables (except lettuce)	PER81876v4	Abamectin	14	6 Avermectins
Legume vegetables	PER81867v2 PER81876v4	Cyromazine Abamectin	7 7	17 Cyromazine 6 Avermectins
Lettuce (head and leafy)	PER88640	Spirotetramat (suppression only)	1	23 Tetronic



Lettuce—head lettuce only	PER81867v2	Cyromazine	7	17 Cyromazine
Macadamia	Registration for leafminer	Acephate (e.g., IA acephate 970 SG and others)	Not required when used as directed	1B Organophosphates
Nursery stock (non-food)	PER88977	Abamectin Azadirachtin Cyromazine Emamectin Chlorantraniliprole & Thiamethoxam Cyantraniliprole Indoxacarb Spinetoram	NA	6 Avermectins UN Unknown 17 Cyromazines 6 Avermectins 28 Diamides & 4A Neonicotinoids 28 Diamides 22A Oxadiazines 5 Spinosyns
	PER9795v8	Imidacloprid	NA	4A Neonicotinoids
	PER9796v5	Bifenthrin	NA	3A Pyrethroids
	PER10043v6	Bifenthrin	NA	3A Pyrethroids
	PER83506	Cyromazine	NA	17 Cyromazines
Ornamental shrubs and ornamental farm and forest trees	Registration for leafminer	Dimethoate (eg Katar Insecticide and others)	NA	1B Organophosphates
Parsley (field and protected)	PER88640	Spirotetramat (suppression only)	3	23 Tetronic
Potato	PER90387	Cyantraniliprole	7	28 Diamides
Pulses	PER89184	Dimethoate	H14 G14	1B Organophosphates
Rhubarb (field)	PER88640 PER81876v4	Spirotetramat (suppression only) Abamectin	3	23 Tetronic 6 Avermectins
Root and tuber vegetables	PER81867v2 PER81876v4	Cyromazine Abamectin	7 14	17 Cyromazine 6 Avermectins
Rice	Registration for leaf miner	Trichlorfon (eg Tyranex 500 SL and others)	2	1B Organophosphate
Snow peas	PER88640 PER87878	Spirotetramat (suppression only) Spinetoram	H3 G3	23 Tetronic 5 Spinosyns
Spinach and silverbeet	PER87631v2	Chlorantraniliprole	3	28 Diamides
Stalk and stem vegetables	PER81867v2	Cyromazine	7	17 Cyromazine
Sugar snap peas	PER88640 PER87878	Spirotetramat (suppression only) Spinetoram	H3 G3	23 Tetronic 5 Spinosyns
Tomatoes	PER90387 PER88640	Cyantraniliprole Spirotetramat (suppression only)	1 1	28 Diamides 23 Tetronic



NGINA Strategic Plan 2020–2023

The purpose of a strategic plan is to set an organisation's overall goals and to develop a plan to achieve them.

NGINA had an existing strategic plan that expired at the end of 2020. In July last year the Directors engaged a new CEO who was tasked with developing the next strategic plan.

A comprehensive member engagement survey was

conducted, which sought members' views on their biggest issues and concerns, what products and services NGINA should be offering to members and the most effective communication platforms. More than half of NGINA members responded to the survey and the results have informed this plan.

NGINA VISION

The vision of NGINA is to have a growing, united and sustainable nursery and garden industry that promotes its contribution to the health and well-being of the NSW/ACT economy, its environments and people.

The NGINA Strategic Plan 2020–2023 sets out an ambitious plan to facilitate our members' success in growing their businesses in a profitable, efficient, responsible and environmentally safe manner through four main pillars:

- 1. Membership services**—identifying and delivering on member needs with a range of desirable services to ensure membership retention and growth.
- 2. Professional development**—supporting our members to improve their business' professionalism, performance and profit and supporting them in obtaining the necessary skills, qualifications and experience. Promoting the industry as an attractive career option.
- 3. Advocacy**—Building strong relationships with state and local government through mutual responsibilities around growth, investment, biosecurity and environmental responsibility.
- 4. Association sustainability**—identifying and developing services to improve the economic sustainability of the association to provide tangible growth.

Summary

Imperative	Activities	KPIs	Measures
1. Membership Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a review of NGINA member benefits, services and acquisition Undertake exit interviews Generate statistical reports on member attendance Review member communication platforms Assist members with obtaining grants Conduct state-wide events Use technology to deliver member services Explore a supply chain solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a hierarchy of member needs and develop a member services program Increase membership Increase membership participation in NGINA events and training Increase member engagement with communication platforms Develop technology platforms to deliver member services Develop business solutions across the supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member engagement survey conducted annually Board-approved membership services program Board-approved communications plan Online member meetings and services Establish a committee to address supply, transport and freight, and to make recommendations for Board approval

Summary (continued)

Imperative	Activities	KPIs	Measures
2. Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop informative and educational programs Reassess future leaders' program Build stronger relationships with RTOs and GTCs Promote the skill of the industry Develop a strategy to target the younger generation as potential consumers and/or future industry employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an annual calendar of NGINA training courses and events Engage future leaders Develop apprentice recruiting information Create technical information sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board-approved training program Reintroduce the Next-Gen Program Create technical information sheets for the website Promote apprenticeships and measure member uptake year on year
3. Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policy positions on key issues Develop consistent messages about the value and importance of the nursery industry Foster relationships to assist NGINA in its lobbying efforts Develop and implement an advocacy plan Undertake marketing initiatives to consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policy positions Engage with external stakeholders Engage with potential students and employees Engage with local government and the ministers for water and agriculture Develop a submission template Develop an advocacy plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board-approved policy positions Delivered outcomes aligned to policy Board-approved advocacy plan Delivered outcomes aligned to advocacy
4. Association Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase net membership Review the NGINA partnership program Increase alternative revenue streams Research possible commercial deals for members Undertake a review of the membership categories Undertake an operational review of NGINA's constitution and NGINA's bylaws Develop director induction packs and clearly defined director portfolios Undertake an operational review of NGINA office processes and procedures Develop a process to enhance governance oversight of expenditure Strategically assess Trade Day Review staff job descriptions and employment contracts Conduct a WHS audit of Trade Day and the NGINA office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase membership Develop a partnership program with clearly identified benefits and increase revenue Suggest improvements to the constitution and bylaws Improve financial oversight Explore alternatives to Trade Day Develop job descriptions, identify KPIs and implement a development plan for all staff, review contracts Undertake a skills matrix of the directors and suggest director portfolios Implement safety protocols for Trade Day and develop a safety management plan for the NGINA office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership increased by a minimum of 66 members or enough membership revenue to cover at least 60% of NGINA costs Board-approved partnership package. Increase revenue by 100% in the first year, 50% in the second year and 50% in the third year or 20% of NGINA costs by the third year Board-approved alternative revenue streams. \$90,000 or 20% of NGINA costs Board-approved corporate governance structure including director portfolios, an updated constitution, and the introduction of an audit and risk committee Improved NGINA processes and procedures



Specific KPIs

Target	Baseline/2020	2021	2022	2023
Increase membership numbers	200 (aim for 210)	220 (aim for 240)	242 (aim for 260)	266 (aim for 280)
Increase partnership revenue	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$60,000	\$90,000
Increase revenue from alternative revenue streams	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$60,000	\$90,000

To ensure NGINA is best placed to deliver on the strategic plan, each NGINA Board Director has been allocated a portfolio to oversee. Below are the portfolios. If you are interested in joining a committee or would like to be involved, please email either the relevant Director or Anita Campbell (CEO) at NGINA on anita.campbell@ngina.com.au.

Director Portfolios

MALCOLM CALDER

President

president@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Corporate Governance and Investment

DAVID JAKOBS

Vice President

vicepresident@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Special Interest and Regional Groups, Complaints and Disciplinary

ROBERT LOVE

Robert.love@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Treasurer/Audit and Risk/Investment

ANDY CAMERON

andy.cameron@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Policy and Advocacy

DAVID CLIFFE

David.cliffe@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Membership Services/Accreditation

DES LEEKE

info@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Membership Services/Trade Day

NICHOLE ROBERTS

Nichole.roberts@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Training and Professional Development

SAMANTHA BIRKWOOD

Sam.birkwood@ngina.com.au

Portfolio: Marketing and Communications

NGINA's Industry Awards 2020

NGINA's gala dinner and industry awards presentation night was a sell-out event held in November at Springfield House, Dural, and hosted by Logie winner, Costa Georgiadis, a landscape architect, television presenter and host of Gardening Australia.

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



► 25-YEAR RECOGNITION AWARDS

INN Ferns & Foliage, Bloomin Lot, GreenLife Structures, Flora Nursery and Arborglen all received 25-Year Member awards.



From left to right: Steve Bonamy of INN Ferns & Foliage, Jeff Collins of Bloomin Lot, Alex Smith of GreenLife Structures, Tim Dempster of Arborglen

► 40-YEAR RECOGNITION AWARDS

Scotts Tubes received its 40-Year Member award and Glenfield Wholesale Nursery received its 40+ Year Member award.



From left to right: Glenn and Greg Scott, and Candice Towne from Scotts Tubes. Kylie Ashby and Karen O'Brien from Glenfield Wholesale Nursery

► LUCKY DOOR PRIZE

2020's lucky door prize was an amazing picnic hamper full of wine, glasses, chocolate and many other goodies. It was presented by Matt Brown of C-Mac Industries, an NGINA silver partner, and was taken home by lucky winner Ross Miller.



The next set of awards was all about recognising best practice and exceptional achievement in wholesale/production and retail nurseries, allied suppliers and industry bloomers across NSW and the ACT.

It was obvious that 2020's finalists had once again raised the bar, which is even more amazing considering what a hard year it was. "Our members have continually provided an essential service during a time when we have never needed them more. Whether guests took home a plaque or not, it must be remembered that everyone in the industry is a winner for

getting through 2020," said Anita Campbell, NGINA CEO.

Anita continued, "In saying that, some members absolutely excelled and NGINA is delighted to recognise the individual efforts and contributions of these industry representatives across a wide range of categories. As expected, the standard of these entries was exceptionally high and each and every one of the finalists demonstrated a strong commitment to excellence in the nursery and garden industry."

NGINA's industry award winners for 2020 were:

► WHOLESALE/PRODUCTION NURSERY OF THE YEAR 2020: **SCOTTS TUBES**

Cameron Blakemore from Garden City Plastics (NGINA's platinum partner) presented the Wholesale/Production Nursery of the Year 2020 award to **Scotts Tubes**. The judges of this category said that while the finalists all set a high standard for the industry to follow, Scotts Tubes stood out as a clear winner. Greg, Candice and Glenn have demonstrated a clear and united vision, and key improvements include the installation of WiFi across the site, improved water capture

and storage, improved tariffication around the site and improved labelling for stock management. The grounds on which the site is located are kept in excellent condition and Scotts Tubes continues to remain NIASA accredited. Growers of upstart tubestock, renaissance herbs, romantic cottage flowers, kangaroo paws and other flowering products, Scotts Tubes is located at Mangrove Mountain in NSW.



Cameron Blakemore presenting the award and congratulating Greg Scott



From left to right: Glenn and Greg Scott, and Candice Towne from Scotts Tubes



Scotts Tubes team

► RETAIL NURSERY OF THE YEAR 2020: **HERITAGE NURSERY YARRALUMLA**

Brian Merrick, Retail Mentor & Consultant, announced Heritage Nursery as winner of the Retail Nursery of the Year 2020 award. Brian explained the judging process, which included an independent mystery shopping report and a visit by the judge. Brian shared his thoughts on what makes an exceptional retail nursery and explained that Heritage Nursery was clean and tidy with well-presented and friendly staff. The layout of the garden centre is of a free-form nature that guides customers on a journey past most of the product range—indoors and outdoors. There was good use of inspirational and seasonal displays to engage and inspire customers. Their dedication to making their garden centre a COVID-safe place for customers to shop is outstanding.

Due to COVID-19 concerns, Heritage Nursery was unable to attend our event, however, they certainly raised a glass upon hearing the happy news.



Brian Merrick, Retail Mentor & Consultant, announcing the winner of the Retail Nursery of the Year 2020 award



From left to right: John Cassidy, Shaen Flakelar, Scott Burns and Dean Bilby of Heritage Nursery raising a glass from the ACT

► ALLIED SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR 2020: ICL SPECIALTY FERTILIZERS

Malcolm Calder, NGINA President and Marketing Manager of NGINA's silver partner, Transplant Systems, announced the winner of the Allied (non-greenlife) Supplier of the Year 2020 award as ICL Specialty Fertilizers. This category was judged by two industry veterans—Ross Miller and Bruce Pike—who were very impressed with the management team at ICL and their commitment to create new products that were environmentally responsible.



Malcolm Calder announces the winner of the Allied Supplier of the Year 2020 award



Robert Megier, Regional Sales Manager at ICL Specialty Fertilizers

► INDUSTRY BLOOMER OF THE YEAR 2020: JON PHILLIPONI FROM ANDREASENS GREEN

Andy Cameron (owner of Agnov8 Pty Ltd and recently appointed NGINA Board Director) and Judy Horton (freelance garden writer at *Gardening Australia* magazine) were the judges of this award. They felt it was a great privilege to judge this category and to meet such fine young people. The enthusiasm of all the nominees augurs well for the future of horticulture and the industry at large. The judges were impressed by Jon's maturity in which he handled the challenges of 2020, and found him to be particularly committed to improving the sustainability of the business and encouraging more young people to the industry.



Andy Cameron and Judy Horton, judges of the Industry Bloomer of the Year 2020 award



From left to right 2020's finalists: Tahlia Macri, Four Seasons Nursery; winner Jon Philliponi, Andreasens Green; and Ashley Walker, Welby Garden Centre

As you can see, our 2020 awards were a roaring success and showcased the excellence of operators in our industry. As words of encouragement for this year's awards, remember that awards can contribute to successful recognition among both your peers and the public in the following ways:

- 1. Benchmarking with others in your industry**—entering the arena and trying to win a business award allows you the opportunity to compare your company with others in your industry. The entire exercise of nominating your business could hold more value for your company than actually winning the award.
- 2. Increases visibility and enhances reputation**—an award can help garner a significant amount of visibility within the industry and attract new customers by giving your business an edge over your competitors. It can also improve the perceived reputation of a company to the general public, new customers and the like. Recognition may transform a company's reputation from “pretty good” to excellent.
- 3. Awards increase credibility for your company**—winning a business award provides a credible third-party

endorsement for your company. Customers and vendor partners will feel better about their business relationship with your company.

- 4. Free or inexpensive PR and marketing**—awards can be an overlooked tool in your business toolbox. Simply being listed as a nominee for an award can improve brand awareness and promote your business to new customers. Winning an award opens doors to new business and new contacts.
- 5. Employees feel better too**—staff morale and motivation often improve when a company wins an award. Celebrate the victory with your employees. You all deserve it.
- 6. Awards help with recruiting**—awards can help a business attract the best talent. Everyone wants to work for a winner.

Awards celebrate hard work and success and are great PR opportunities.

There is no better time than now to start planning for our 2021 awards and actioning what you may need to do in order to enter and, perhaps, win.



► AND FINALLY, WE'D LIKE TO THANK:

Kenthurst Nursery for supplying the stunning trees at our event



kn
KENTHURST NURSERY



Paterson Fern Nursery for supplying our table centrepieces



SPRINGFIELD HOUSE
FUNCTION CENTRE
EST. 1973



Springfield House in Dural for a wonderful venue and delicious food



Costa Georgiadis for being a fabulous MC



Andreasens Green Wholesale Nurseries



Cameron's Nursery



Stephen Solomons (Solomons Wholesale Nursery and Tube Traders) and Ross Miller



Justin Longhurst and Ashley Walker of Welby Garden Centre



Nichole Roberts (Wyee Nursery and NGINA Board Director) and her husband Adrian



Scotts Tubes



Karen Smith, Editor of *Hort Journal Australia*, and her husband Gary



From left to right: Kylie, Tahlia and Robert Macri, Four Seasons Nursery







Garden City Plastics



Anita Campbell (NGINA CEO) and husband James



Matt de Ville and Michelle Hubbard, Oasis Horticulture



Bloomin Lot



Burbank Nurseries



Matt and Sam Birkwood (Bamboo World and NGINA Board Director)



Anita Campbell, NGINA CEO



Malcolm Calder (NGINA President and Marketing Manager of Transplant Systems)



Four Seasons Nursery



From left to right: Kim, Lynn, Amy, Craig and Anita—the team at NGINA



Some of the NGINA Board Directors, from left to right: Robert Love (Batlow Rhododendron Nursery), Malcolm Calder (Transplant Systems), Sam Birkwood (Bamboo World), Nichole Roberts (Wyee Nursery), David Jakobs (Oasis) and Andy Cameron (Agnov8)

► WITH COSTA



Scotts Tubes Takes Home the Win

by Candice Towne, Director, Scotts Tubes

At our gala dinner and industry awards presentation night in November last year, not only did Scotts Tubes collect their NGINA 40-Year Member award, they were also announced winners of our Wholesale/Production Nursery of the Year 2020 award. A very proud occasion for the entire Scotts Tubes team but perhaps a bitter-sweet moment for Greg, Candice and Glenn, as it coincided with the 17-year anniversary of their parents' death.

We asked Candice to give us an insight into what it's been like taking over and running the family business from such a young age, what they've learned/experienced along the way and what winning the award means to her, Greg and Glenn, and the team at Scotts Tubes.

"Wednesday 19 November 2003 was a sad day for Greg, Glenn and myself, and everyone in the nursery industry who knew our parents Denis and Denise. I still remember the day quite clearly—I was in the office getting the afternoon truck invoices ready. I could see a police car coming down the driveway and although I didn't understand why at the time, a sick feeling instantly came into my stomach. I had tried calling my parents earlier that morning and had thought to myself it was odd they had not answered my call or had even tried to call back. I felt anxious as the three police officers walked towards the office. They sat me down and told me the news no child would ever want to hear. I could feel myself starting to become overwhelmed, my heart was shattering and I could feel the tears beginning to roll down my face. I remember getting up and running out of the office into the arms of an employee and close family friend. It was like everyone already knew why the police officers were there. They then informed Greg who was off site at the time and then Glenn, once he was home from primary school. Before we knew it there were people everywhere at the nursery, with more coming from every direction to come and pay their respects.

We knew continuing the business was never going to be easy but with Greg having an understanding of the nursery side of things and with me in the office, we knew we could make a good go of it. We have learned so much in the last 17 years and are still striving for that perfection. We started out not knowing what basil was to having just implemented a new climatised hot house equipped with all the latest technology. We've also had our fair share of learning battles along the way, such as crop failures, storm damage and fires.

Greg and I have been running the business for the last 17 years, with Glenn joining us over the last few years, which completes



Glenn and Greg Scott, and Candice Towne

the trio. Siblings working together is not an easy task but we have each managed to excel in our own particular areas of strength and knowledge. We have been lucky enough to have a motivated and committed team working with us, which is also leading Scotts Tubes to its success.

Winning the Wholesale/Production Nursery of the Year 2020 award means that all our hard work and dedication over the years has paid off. We know our parents would be so proud of how far we've come and what we've accomplished so far. Even though there are days when I would love to hear their thoughts on what we have achieved and the advice they could give us, I know they would be proud of the way we have built and run their business."



Greg, Candice and Glenn with mum, Denise



Their dad, Denis

One of our current employees Cathy had the privilege of working with my parents back in 1990. In her words:

“Denis and Denise were a very hardworking couple, who looked after their employees very well, not to mention raising a family of three children. Denis and Denise were way ahead of their time in the nursery industry, always looking for or creating new ideas to streamline the production of plants, which they succeeded in. I finished up working for Denis and Denise in 1994 and was re-employed as a Sales Rep in 2017 with Greg, Candice and Glenn. The nursery has grown so much in the three years I've been here, let alone over the past 30 years—everything is so much bigger and technologically advanced. Working for Denis and Denise was an absolute pleasure and an honour, now working for Greg, Candice and Glenn is another pleasure and honour, it's a wonderful family business to work for.”

Jon Philliponi —Industry Bloomer of the Year 2020



Jon works at Andreasens Green Wholesale Nurseries and has done for the last 12 years. He is someone who is particularly committed to improving the sustainability of the business and encouraging more young people to the industry. Having won NGINA's Industry Bloomer of the Year 2020 award, we thought we should find out a bit more about Jon by way of a short Q&A session. We also got in touch with the two judges to hear what they had to say about 2020's winner.

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

I started back in 2008 in early December as a first-year apprentice at Andreasens at the Kemps Creek site. I was a young 16 year old, keen on getting my hands dirty. The transition from a comfy 22 degrees in a classroom to tops of 47 degrees at Kemps Creek was a real eye opener but seeing how plants and nature adapt in such situations, and how I can assist in their vigour and growth on a day-to-day basis, inspired me to learn and nurture. My mum was always a keen gardener and specialised in roses. As I was growing up I always helped out, even if it was just the elementary jobs of pulling out weeds. The passion stemmed from the fundamentals of horticulture and I am still amazed how I wake up every day and learn something new.

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

I started as an apprentice at Andreasens almost 12 years ago and have loved every minute of it. I studied my Certificate 3 at Richmond TAFE and I am currently studying my Diploma of Horticulture. I also completed a management course in 2019 through Leadership Management Australia (LMA).

WHAT ROLE DO YOU CURRENTLY UNDERTAKE AT ANDREASENS?

I'm currently the Site Manager at Kemps Creek, which is a 60-acre site and Andreasens' main depot. Day to day I can manage anywhere up to 40 staff members.

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

As I stated before, Kemps Creek has extremely harsh weather—from 47-degrees days in summer to minus 4-degrees frost in winter (as a silver lining if you buy our stock you will be sure that your plant is hardy enough to withstand the landscape!). Drought has also heavily affected this site and, being such a large site, we are dependent on dam water. There have certainly been a few sleepless nights over the last few years!

Staffing is also a huge issue across our entire industry as many of the younger generation are no longer choosing horticulture as a career path.



“I found Jon to be a well-rounded and mature young man who has a great passion for the horticultural industry. Jon's work ethic, drive and passion have seen his employer encourage him to move into leadership roles within the business.

It makes me proud as a long-standing member of the nursery industry to see the next generation of young people enter our industry.”

Andy Cameron (owner of Agnov8 Pty Ltd, NGINA Board Director and judge of the Industry Bloomer of the Year 2020 award)

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THESE CHALLENGES?

The key to a life in horticulture is to always learn from your mistakes. I have always had a proactive approach to life, rather than reactive. When it comes to stock during harsh weather conditions, I always err on the side of caution.

The staffing issue I mentioned earlier is a huge concern and what the Andreasens' team has done to help overcome this is to hold workshops for a lot of schools throughout the Sydney region. Being such a big site, producing a mass of stock, it really does capture their interest—we can hold anywhere up to 1.5 million 150-mm plants at any one time and in tree varieties we grow up to 2,000-litre stock. The excitement that I see in the groups that come through proves to me that horticulture and nurseries do have a future but we need to keep on top of this issue and keep encouraging the younger generations to join the industry we love.

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

I have been blown away by the support that you get from other growers in the industry. I could sit and listen to people in our industry for hours; the wealth of knowledge that's in our community is amazing!

TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS?

I am extremely passionate and competitive in everything I do.

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

I'm excited to say that I know I have a bigger role to play in this industry. I also want to help the company that gave me an opportunity all those years ago when I was 16 years old. Andreasens has been so supportive and crucial to my development.

“We were very impressed with the mature way Jon had handled the challenges of the past year. It's clear that he appreciates the essential value of teamwork and has a good understanding of the importance of working together to solve problems. He is sure to continue to be a great asset to his business and our industry.”

Judy Horton OAM (freelance garden writer at Gardening Australia magazine and judge of the Industry Bloomer of the Year 2020 award)

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

Learn, learn and learn, and stick at it. It is the most beautiful thing about this industry and I can honestly say that after 12 years I am still learning something new every day.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE WON INDUSTRY BLOOMER OF THE YEAR 2020?

It means everything. Twelve years of hard work and to be nominated by those outside of my company shows that someone else is impressed with what I am achieving at this site. Now I need to keep using my story as a stepping stone for the next generation coming through.

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

I have three little Jack Russell Terriers, all under the age of four, and they are a handful. I am also an absolute tragic at golf and most sports.

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Best Retail Nursery of the Year Award

What is Good, What is Not So Good and Why You Should Enter in 2021

by Brian Merrick, Retail Mentor and Consultant

When I worked in retail many years ago (some unkind people might say aeons ago), if a customer said, “This is the best garden centre I’ve ever been to”, my old boss would look sideways to me and say, “If we’re the best how bad are the rest?” Since then, I have worked in and visited many garden centres, both here and overseas, and often when I am told this is the best, my old boss’ words always ring in the back of my mind. It is not that this means there is anything wrong with the centre, but points more to the notion that nothing is perfect and there is always more that can be done. This is a good thing especially in a retail environment that is rapidly evolving. Where once garden centres were the domain of the elderly and the retired, they have now become the territory of the younger generations, the plant parents, the self-sufficient gardener and the indoor plant collectors, and are now being driven by new technology and the influencers.

By and large, garden centres are getting a lot right, even so there is still plenty of room for improvement. Let me outline some of the good and not so good I have noticed in recent years.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE

Most have embraced social media and have an online platform—although some still do not utilise this effectively for online shopping. When it comes to websites, they are not set and forget. They must be refreshed and kept up to date. It is not uncommon to find information and reference to events or promotions that are no longer relevant or are long past.

DISPLAYS

These are better than they used to be. There is much more use of colour and themes. Considering that there are four



Toilet at Greenbourne Nursery



Heritage Nursery home delivery sign



Main entrance to Heritage Nursery

major types of displays—seasonal, impulse, inspirational and one I like to call library. The library is your category area where stock is displayed under headings such as conifers, seedlings, fruits, shrubs, trees, etc. Of all the displays, impulse would be the most underutilised either in the sales area or at the registers. Effective impulse displays are one of the best ways to boost your average sale.

INFRASTRUCTURE

This is a difficult area as many garden centres have been built on challenging sites that are sloping or multilevel. There are also plenty of old buildings. The good news is that most are well maintained and kept in good order. The downside is that gravel paths, steps and slopes can make it hard for older customers and customers with disabilities. Toilets, an area I visit more frequently as I get older, have shown a steady improvement over the years. At a very minimum there needs to be at least one public toilet, it needs to be clean, have a place to wash and dry hands, and plenty of toilet paper. I have noticed that as garden centres renovate or build new, they are providing toilets that cater for all genders and disabilities. Well maintained toilet facilities show a commitment to your customers' comfort.

LAYOUT

Keeping in mind the constraints of the site, an effective layout is one of the most difficult for garden centres to get right, often for the reasons outlined above. Still, this is an area in most centres that is ripe for positive improvement. A continuous logical flow that leads customers on a journey around the site is the aim. Customers do not like to go down dead ends. There are two other basic principles that, according to Paco Underhill (the author of *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*), are a good foundation for establishing traffic flow to maximise sales. The first is “shop right”, the tendency for shoppers on entering your shop to typically want to turn right. The other is the “three-step rule”, when a customer enters your shop they will take three steps before stopping to get a view of the layout. Why are these important? Any signs, displays or products for sale, etc., that are within the three-step zone will be wasted as customer will not notice them. Forcing a customer through the layout to shop left and not right or straight ahead on entering has them feeling a little disoriented and not paying full attention to shopping. The first few metres after the three steps are the most crucial in your garden centre. They can influence their whole shopping experience from how long they stay to how much they will pay. Those first few metres are a big topic, best addressed in a separate article.

SIGNS

Each year the use of signage is getting better. More of them are being used. I realise that there is a fine line between having

enough and having too many. After all you do not want them to end up looking like a row of tombstones in a graveyard as signs are most likely to be the first thing your customers see and, therefore, most likely set the lasting image they will have of your centre. The quality of your signs can say a lot about the quality of your garden centre. Signs should be consistent with standardised formats, fonts and point size. Limit the number of signs to three or four. They should also be in good condition, free from fading, dirt and damage.

STAFF AND SERVICE

During this years' judging one of the highlights was the staff. Without exception all were neatly attired and readily identifiable. The introduction of an independently assessed mystery shopper element resulted in positive reports for all involved. Although one mystery shop for the awards is random, it will still give you a good snapshot of how your customers rate your service. Signing up to a regular program of mystery shops would be well worth considering.¹



The team at Four Seasons Nursery

OVERVIEW

In the good old days garden centres could be successful by putting plants on the ground and opening their doors. Now retail is far more competitive. Garden centres must keep up with the latest technology and understand how to provide a profitable customer experience.

Not everyone can be the garden centre of the year. However, everyone who puts themselves forward for the award will benefit from the process. It will make you assess your garden centre with fresh eyes. It enhances unity, as your staff work together to achieve a better outcome. Just being involved will create a better experience for your customers and your bottom line. Knowing that you may not be able to take out the top award is not a reason to not put yourself forward. Any tool that helps to make your business more successful, especially one as cost effective as the NGINA awards, should be a given for all garden centres.

As the pros outweigh the cons, there is no excuse to not enter and there is no better time than now to start planning for the 2021 awards.

¹ Mystery shopper programs are available through Garden Centres of Australia

NGINA Bridges the Gap Between Industry, Educators and Students

The vision of NGINA is to have a growing and sustainable nursery and garden industry. The NGINA Strategic Plan 2020–2023 sets out an ambitious plan to facilitate our members' success in growing their businesses in a profitable, efficient, responsible and environmentally safe manner through four main pillars, one of which is professional development. The success of our industry is completely dependent on its future businesses and their employees, therefore, we must promote the industry as an attractive career option to shore up our future workforce.

An important role of NGINA is to link industry with education providers and students. We must bridge the gap between the education and employment sectors to better prepare students for the world of work and to promote our industry as the preferred choice for their career. Activities within the strategic plan include:

- Develop informative and educational programs for our members and potential members.
- Reassess the future leaders' program.
- Build stronger relationships with registered training organisations (RTOs) and group training companies (GTCs).

- Promote the skills of the industry and develop a strategy to target the younger generation as potential consumers and/or future industry employees.

- Develop apprentice recruiting information.

Since the launch of NGINA's strategic plan at the AGM in November last year, NGINA has already developed some amazing programs in this area. Our BTSM has run a workshop at Richmond TAFE, NGINA arranged for Ally Jackson from Ozbreed to run a workshop in December for agriculture students at Marrickville High School, and we are working with the Centre for Excellence in Agricultural Education on a 2021 School Vertical Garden Competition, open to 30 primary and high schools.

2021 SCHOOL VERTICAL GARDEN COMPETITION

In 2021, 30 schools from the greater Sydney region will compete in the 2021 School Vertical Garden Competition to be judged at the Hawkesbury Show in April. School teams will be provided with four vertical panels and 10 planting tubs for use in their installation, donated by NGINA, and a bag of potting mix, to be donated by Grange Growing Solutions.



NGINA BTSM MEETS TAFE STUDENTS

Craig, our Business & Technical Support Manager, met with Stephen Rixon, Head Teacher Horticulture, Richmond College of TAFE, and his students to talk about the nursery and garden industry and the role of NGINA.

The class of 24 first-year students comprised 3 production apprentices, 2 retail apprentices, 4 horticulture trainees and 15 non apprentices.

The concept of working with TAFE students is to enable them to:

1. engage with industry as early in their career as possible,
2. ensure they have access to resources that will enable them to confidently conduct their studies, and
3. potentially, line them up with members who are looking for a first-year apprentice.

NGINA has a great relationship with TAFE and this initiative will continue with this particular group of students as they continue with their studies, as well as include other first-year groups as they embark on theirs. All students have been offered an NGINA student membership.

Schools are to design a vertical garden installation that links to one of the following themed areas:

- Food production
- Indigenous plants
- Climate resilient planting (drought resilient and water efficient plantings or plantings linked to cooling urban spaces)

Installations must include established plantings aligned to the chosen theme and educational/artistic components to educate students and the community—these components can be linked to current research on the theme, the



reasoning for chosen plant choices, plant management requirements for success and other informative/engaging materials. Systems must also include water management components suitable to the chosen plantings.

OZBREED AND NGINA PROMOTE HORTICULTURE EDUCATION PATHWAYS TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

At the end of the school year NGINA was approached by the Department of Education to conduct a basic horticulture workshop for Year 11 students. The nine students are in the vocational stream of Years 11 and 12 at Marrickville High School.

Ozbreed volunteered their time and expertise to lead the workshop. Ozbreed's Ally Jackson, recently recruited in the role of Communications & Business Relations, is also a qualified horticulturist, freelance garden writer and sometimes gardening presenter. Along with Ozbreed's second-year apprentice Caitlin Desmond, currently studying Certificate III Production Nursery, she engaged with the students and helped get their hands dirty while explaining the joys of the industry.

The aim of the workshop was to show students the alternative, vocational path to employment and life after school. While being walked through the process of planting out a garden bed, the instructors enthusiastically explained the industry path—studying at TAFE, working as apprentices and gaining full-time employment in our varied, interesting and fantastic industry.

The students were taught about soil pH testing, aspect of a site, soil and plant requirements and basic planting layout. Sharing a bed with a well-established date palm and lilly pilly meant a fair bit of root competition and a careful selection of plants. Ozbreed donated Agapanthus Bingo Blue, Isabella Liriope and Lucia Dianella. The students jumped into the physical side of the job and cleared some roots, conditioned the planting holes, successfully planted out the garden bed, and only broke one fork and a spade with their overzealous efforts! They watered and conditioned the plants with a seaweed solution. Finally, they mulched the bed using Staymulch—a 100% hemp product with great binding and insulating properties.

The students went home with Ozbreed showbags including stationary, a Sea Urchin Aloe for their own gardens, an NGINA water bottle and some appreciation for the power of plants and how they bring life to an otherwise grey space. At least two students enquired about horticulture study the following day—which is a small but reassuring success!



How to Make the Most of Your Apprentice Training

As you know the Federal Government has announced a new \$1.2 billion Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) plan to help pay the wages of new apprentices and trainees. Under the new measure employers are eligible for a 50% subsidy of the wages for a new or recommencing apprentice or trainee for the period up to 30 September 2021, up to \$7,000 per quarter. Standard incentives may also still apply for the employers of new entrant trainees or apprentices.

There are more than 500 occupations across Australia that offer apprenticeships ranging from Certificate II to advanced diploma levels.

All apprentices and trainees are required to attend and complete a formal qualification training component with a public or private registered training organisation (RTO). Therefore, once you have found your apprentice you will need to determine what training course you would like them to do and who will deliver the training. The employer, the training institution and the apprentice will then sign a training contract which is a legal document that will follow the apprentice's training through the life of the apprenticeship. Training contracts outline the course units delivered by the training organisation and list the competencies of the units taught within a formal training session.

Australian apprenticeships training can be on-the-job, off-the-job or a combination of both. Your training provider can negotiate the apprentice attendance and study pattern with both the apprentice and the employer.

Regardless of how the training is delivered and by which training organisation, the employer must ensure the apprentice is attending formal training sessions and completing assessment tasks. The employer is required to regularly go through the apprentice's training contact and deem the apprentice competent in practical applications that are in line with the units delivered during formal training. Training contracts are signed off on a quarterly basis and the apprentice must be supervised on site at all times.

Below is some information on the courses available for the nursery and garden industry. All are fully government subsidised JobTrainer courses, which means that the training is free for apprentices in NSW and ACT.

AHC30716 CERTIFICATE III IN HORTICULTURE

The nationally recognised Certificate III in Horticulture will jump start an apprentice's career as a sought-after horticulturist in an evolving, growing industry. The student will learn how to create and nurture different types of green

environments that are both beautiful and functional, and be industry-ready for a fulfilling career.

Through theory and practical coursework students will:

- learn how to recognise common and rare plants.
- learn how to apply specialist amenity pruning techniques.
- learn how to plan and install irrigation systems.
- learn how to plan and implement programs such as pest control and disease, plant nutrition and soil improvement.
- develop the personal attributes such as the spirit of collaborative teamwork, working independently, good communication, analytical and investigative problem-solving skills.
- be eligible to apply for a chemical users' licence through the Environmental Protection Agency.

There are 25 Certificate III Horticulture courses being delivered at 15 TAFE locations across NSW and the ACT. Follow this link for a list of locations: <https://bit.ly/3mJJEtQ>.

There are also three private RTOs currently delivering the Certificate III Horticulture course:

- Canberra Institute of Technology, trading as CIT Solutions
- Murwillumbah Adult Education Centre Inc
- Open Colleges Pty Ltd

The following link will provide you with contact details of all RTOs delivering this course: <https://bit.ly/2JgVzBG>.

AHC31116 CERTIFICATE III IN PRODUCTION NURSERY

TAFE currently provides the Certificate III in Production Nursery course (<https://bit.ly/3hzbZsUO>) at both its Ourimbah and Richmond campuses.

This qualification provides a general vocational outcome for a nursery person working in a production nursery. Students will learn from industry experts about:

- the latest nursery techniques and best practices.
- biosecurity and the use of chemicals.
- irrigation.
- pest and disease management and control, and the fertiliser requirements of plants.
- plant recognition, plant nutrition and propagation techniques.

Students will be eligible to apply for a chemical users' licence through the Environmental Protection Agency.



Josh Ward (L) and Marc Patterson (R) from/at Kenthurst Nursery, Kenthurst, NSW

There are currently no RTOs that deliver this course.

AHC31216 CERTIFICATE III IN RETAIL NURSERY

The nationally recognised Certificate III in Retail Nursery will give students the skills they need to start their career in a nursery or garden centre.

Students will learn about:

- the propagation, production and maintenance of plants for sale or hire.
- providing advice on plant selection.
- retailing plants and associated products.
- the development and promotion of plant products and services.

TAFE currently runs three part-time courses (<https://bit.ly/3pnZhJf>) at both Richmond and Ourimbah campuses. There are currently no private RTOs that deliver the Certificate III in Retail Nursery.

AHC30816 CERTIFICATE III IN ARBORICULTURE

Arboriculture is the cultivation, management and study of individual trees, shrubs, vines and other perennial woody plants. The science of arboriculture studies how these plants grow and respond to cultural practices and to their environment.

Taught by industry professionals, students will learn:

- health and safety.
- aerial rigging.
- arboriculture techniques and practices.
- specialised machinery operation.
- how to use chemicals.

TAFE currently runs two part-time courses (<https://bit.ly/3aAUAY5>) at both Ryde and Padstow campuses.

ArbTrack Australia (arbtrack.com.au), a private RTO, delivers this course nationwide.

MORE INFORMATION

Apprenticeship Support Australia offers expert advice on all aspects of hiring an apprentice. Their dedicated team can visit your workplace to conduct a skills assessment and identify training opportunities.

For further information on anything we've mentioned in this article or any aspect of hiring an apprentice, please call or email NGINA's Account Manager:

Bree Hicks

Apprenticeship Support Australia

t: 0477 366 839

e: bree.hicks@businessaustralia.com

Bree can help you find the appropriate course for your apprentice, the right RTO for your needs and coordinate the legal paperwork for your apprentice to begin their study. She can also provide an initial assessment of your eligibility for incentives and benefits. Apprenticeship Support Australia's services are funded under an Australian government contract and are provided at no cost to you.

APPRENTICESHIP
support
AUSTRALIA





Serpentine Leafminer: This Plant Industry Pest Arrives in Australia

by Martin Horwood, Independent Entomological Consultant

Serpentine leafminer (SLM), *Liriomyza huidobrensis* (Diptera: Agromyzidae), is an international pest of vegetable and ornamental crops. The adult leafminer is a minute black and yellow fly, around 2 mm long (Figure 1). The flies make holes in plant leaves—known as stippling damage—in which to feed and lay eggs. The insect's common name relates to the damage caused by larvae feeding through the internal tissue layer of leaves, forming cream-coloured tunnels that are curving and twisting like a snake (Figure 2). Tunnels widen to over 3 mm as the larvae get bigger and are quite eye-catching. When mature, the larvae move out of the host plant and enter the soil where they undergo pupation.

SLM originates from Central and South America and since the 1980s has spread to North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. In October 2020 SLM was detected at a market garden in Western Sydney, NSW. In November another finding was made in the Fassifern Valley, South East Queensland. There is no knowledge about how long the pest has been in Australia nor how it arrived. In November the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) launched an emergency response that included delimiting surveillance and tracing back to sites from which the infested plants may have originated. Over the course of three weeks around 150 properties were inspected. As well as market gardens, SLMs were detected in wholesale nurseries and a retail nursery. Given the wide range of infestation locations and host species, the NSW Government decided that eradication was unfeasible and transitioned to

a pest management program to mitigate spread via trade and to ensure efficacious control options are available.

Notwithstanding the abandonment of the eradication aspect of the emergency response, regional surveillance is ongoing to determine areas that are infested. As part of this program the DPI has asked for ongoing reporting from the public, ideally in the form of fly trapping (using yellow sticky traps) and infested plant sample collection. Details of where traps and samples can be sent are available on the DPI website: <https://bit.ly/3pLJMV>.

While vegetable damage symptoms are the main sign of infestation by SLM, there are native leafminer species in Australia that create the same damage symptoms on plants. To the naked eye the most distinguishing feature of SLM compared to native species is its high level of impact. In other countries SLM have devastating influences on plant growth. Effects on plants include stunting, fruit failure and diseases (due to stippling), while negative effects on businesses include reductions in yield, marketability and costly pest management actions. Production losses of 50% or more have been recorded for several crops, while in Indonesia destruction rates on potatoes have been as high as 70%.

This polyphagous pest has a wide host range including vegetables, e.g., peas, beans, lettuce, celery, beetroot, spinach, broccoli, onions, garlic; ornamentals, e.g., petunia, snapdragon, rose; and weeds. Plant tissue consumption by larvae negatively impacts on plant health by impinging on photosynthesis, which retards growth rates, and causing susceptibility to plant



Figure 1: *Liriomyza huidobrensis* (serpentine leafminer). Adult fly. Image by Bugwood.org

Figure 2: *Liriomyza huidobrensis* (serpentine leafminer). Larval minings and damage to crop. Image by Bugwood.org

diseases. Young plants are worst affected by leafminer feeding, which often leads to their demise.

One of the main elements of controlling SLM is the use of insecticides. These obviously must only be used if permitted by the Australian Pest and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Permits to allow use of chemical products for control of SLM can be found on the website <https://portal.apvma.gov.au/permits>. Currently listed products (as of 5 January 2021) include: Diptex 150 WP Insect Growth Regulator, active ingredient cyromazine; Vertimec Miticide/Insecticide, active ingredient abamectin; Adama Dimethoate 400 Systemic Insecticide, active ingredient dimethoate; and Movento 240 SC Insecticide, active ingredient spirotetramat. Contact insecticides such as organophosphates, synthetic pyrethroids and carbamates won't affect larvae submerged inside plants. Systemic and translaminar insecticides, e.g., abamectin, cyromazine are needed to contact larvae.

While insecticides are a vital control measure, spraying may not always be beneficial. One handicap can be the destruction of parasitic wasps (Hymenoptera), which are another key element in the management of SLM. Wasp populations can be devastated by spraying, especially by the use of non-selective insecticides such as organophosphates and synthetic pyrethroids. Another downside from using insecticides is the potential development of insecticidal resistance by SLM. Rotation of insecticides containing different active ingredients is essential to help ensure insecticide applications remain effective.

Furthermore, in relation to wasp parasitoids, Australia has numerous endemic species belonging to the family Eulophidae, e.g., *Zagrammosoma latilineatum*, *Closterocerus mirabilis* and *Hemiptarsenus varicornis* that target a range of native leafminers and may well infest SLM. These species have the potential for mass rearing and release in enclosed amenities such as glasshouses to control or prevent

infestations by SLM. We also have access to the exotic wasp parasitoid *Diglyphus isaea*, which is already established in Australia. This species is used extensively for bio-control in protected cropping in Europe, Japan and North America. Knowledge about these species already present in Australia means we don't need to import additional exotic species which always involves an element of risk.

Now that SLM has been declared as established, the DPI insists that growers with leafminer hosts and leafminer symptoms comply with their General Biosecurity Duty, part three of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015, which states that:

"Any person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised."

In a nutshell, the main requirement to meet one's obligations under the Biosecurity Act is to limit the impact of the pest on other growers in NSW and potentially nationally. A number of options are available to this end:

- Don't move or sell crops with visible damage.
- Monitor for the presence of pests. Send samples to government bodies for expert identification.
- If possible don't just rely on insecticides but implement an IPM approach to controlling SLM. This can be done by adhering to industry standards such as the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme.
- Treating infected produce with approved insecticides, fumigation or irradiation.
- Ensuring transplants are uninfested, deep ploughing of infested crops to ensure no flies emerge and avoiding planting near old crops.
- Clean used equipment so it is free of soil and plant material before it leaves your property.

Western Australia has implemented interim requirements from NSW. These apply to a range of commodities at risk of infestation by SLM including nursery stock, green leafy or legume vegetables (e.g., beans, snow peas), fresh herbs, fruit with leaves, cut flowers and foliage. The full host list is available on the DPI SLM website (mentioned earlier in this article).

Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility and it is essential that industry and the general public remain on alert and report any unexpected symptoms and suspected sightings of this insect, especially in high-risk situations such as proximity to host plants. If you think you have seen SLM, take a photo and if possible collect a sample then contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.



Bunnings Responds to Concerns Regarding 'Terms of Trade' for Small Suppliers

Kate Carnell is the inaugural Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO) based in Canberra. She acts as an independent advocate for small business owners. ASBFEO has the legislative powers needed to effectively influence our nation's lawmakers, ensuring legislation and regulations are put in place to help small businesses grow.

One key focus for the ASBFEO's efforts over recent years has been payment terms and how these affect small business. There is a persistent trend in Australia of payment times being extended beyond usual industry standards. Late payment, where businesses get paid beyond contract terms, adds to the cash flow problem faced by suppliers. While the average days to get paid in Australia is declining, it is still above 30 days at an average rate of 36.74 days. Ironically, large business are the worst for late payments and small business the fastest.

This imbalance intensifies cash flow pressure for small and family businesses. Scottish Pacific, a large independent finance provider, estimates the cost is \$234.6 billion in lost revenue. That is, SMEs would have generated more revenue if cash flow was improved, as late payments accounted for a 43% downturn in cash flow. Small and family businesses must find other ways to finance the short fall in their working capital. This places stress on smaller businesses with significant ramifications for solvency and mental health.

The outcome; small businesses cannot invest in growth and cannot increase employment.

Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland has been working with ASBFEO since 2018 to address a number of concerns about Bunnings' 'Terms of Trade'. Initially the focus was on the payment times where Bunnings has expected growers to accept a 'settlement discount' for payment at anything less than 60 days. This was of particular interest to ASBFEO who has been very active on this issue across many areas of government and industry (<https://www.asbfeo.gov.au/inquiries/payment-times-and-practices>). ASBFEO would like to see 30 days become the norm, especially for small businesses.

ASBFEO officers met with the Managing Director of Bunnings in 2018 to discuss this and related matters. Then in 2019 Bunnings announced they would be offering 30-day payment terms (with no penalty) to smaller suppliers.

Bunnings individually negotiates its supplier trading terms with each supplier. Bunnings also recognises that a 'one size fits all approach' does not reflect the diverse needs of its supplier base. Accordingly, Bunnings also offers eligible suppliers the further option of participating in a supply chain finance program that allows suppliers to obtain early payment of all or a selection of invoices payable by Bunnings. This program is voluntary for suppliers and operates in

addition to Bunnings' 30-day Australian small business payment terms.

This table provides some example scenarios of the changes:

Settlement time	Old terms	New terms for small suppliers	What that means if you change
A: 14 days	5% settlement discount on invoice value	Not available	From A (old) to B (new) you will be able to keep an extra 5% of each subsequent invoice
B: 30 days	3% settlement discount on invoice value	Nil settlement discount	From B (old) to B (new) you will be able to keep an extra 3% of each subsequent invoice
C: 60 days	Nil settlement discount	Nil settlement discount	From C (old) to B (new) you should get same payment but at 30 days, not 60 days

Any reduction in 'settlement rebate' charged by Bunnings will apply to every invoice. For example, if your annual sales with Bunnings is \$100,000 and you are on 30 days on old terms and decide to move to new terms, still on 30 days, then your bottom line should improve by \$3,000 per annum.

If you are on 60 days and decide to move to 30 days then your cash flow may improve marginally but your bottom line won't change. If you go from 14 days to 30 days your cash flow may be affected in the short term but long term you should be better off by \$5,000 per year (where invoices total \$100,000 per annum).

If you meet the definition of a 'small supplier' you are able to request these modified terms from Bunnings at any time.

As confidential professional advisers, NGINA is able to discuss your payment terms with you. Of most concern is any suggestion that the old 'settlement rebate' could be re-absorbed or moved into some other rebate in such a way that you are no better off. If you have any concerns you can call NGINA on (02) 9679 1472 or contact ASBFEO on their enquiries line 1300 650 460.




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Phishing — Securing Your Personal and Banking Details From Hackers

by David Norris, Managing Director, Nortec IT Business Solutions



Have you ever received an email from your bank, the ATO, a credit card company, an airline or any reputable company with an offer of a free holiday, cash bonus or a request for you to update and verify your information? If so, then you have been phished.

Phishing is a way criminals trick people into giving up personal or financial details by pretending to be a legitimate business. These attacks can come from text messages, phone calls, emails, social media, advertising and internet pop-ups. The most popular phished brands include Microsoft, PayPal, Australian banks, Dropbox, Apple, Google, Qantas, Virgin and Adobe.

Phishing can result in your web browser being redirected to a fake web page that looks legitimate. You enter your details; it then transfers you to the real company's website. Unfortunately, your details have now been captured and you make not even realise it.

The results of being phished can result in information being stolen, identity theft or, at worst, having your business data encrypted and held for ransom—this is known as ransomware. Even if you have backups of your encrypted data, ransomware companies now also take a copy of your data prior to it being

encrypted and will release it publicly if you refuse to pay the ransom.

HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

- Do not click on links or open attachments from emails that ask you to update your personal information. Just delete them.
- If you are unsure, do an internet search for the contents of the email with the word “scam” at the end. This will identify many scams.
- When entering your credit information online ensure the website starts with HTTPS (not HTTP) and check for a padlock symbol in the address bar. This ensures the data is encrypted and is unlikely to be a phishing attempt.
- Once phished you may get a phone call, they may have personal information about you and convince you to hand over your credit card information. Don't.
- Most web browsers either have built-in tools or can have a toolbar add-in to identify phishing or fake sites.

If you have been a victim of phishing, contact your financial institutions, contact your IT support company, change all your passwords, report it to the police and report it to the ACCC Scamwatch website (www.scamwatch.gov.au).

The Australian government has released Essential 8: Security Recommendations, which are guidelines for protecting yourself from hackers. Google “essential eight explained”. This outlines the minimum of eight things your business should be doing to protect yourself. There are nearly forty recommendations covered. How many of these are implemented in your business?

I'm a firm believer that everyone needs reliable security in their businesses and am happy to discuss what you have in place and what you should do to ensure your protection, over a coffee or by phone.



Be Green With Your Energy

As a green thumb, there's nothing more rewarding than seeing the fruits of your labour come to life. But the amount of energy the nursery and garden sector consumes is astounding. With all the propagation and irrigation required, as a wholesale or retail operation your energy running costs can go through the roof.

What if there was a more sustainable way to achieve a thriving business—one that's green on both fronts? Through our partnership with Business Australia, there are two free services available to you—both are designed to help you save on your energy consumption costs.

Business Energy Advice Program (BEAP) is a consultative service that reviews your business energy consumption and provides you with a detailed report tailored to your business so you can make positive changes. As a government initiative delivered by Business Australia, it's available to all small businesses of 6–20 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. Plus, 0–5 FTE equivalent if the business self-assesses as being drought affected.

As part of the program you also receive tips on ditching old habits and applying new practices. You'll gain insights on reading your energy bills and have access to a wealth of resources including case studies and fact sheets. Everything you need to make smart choices on your energy consumption.

Another initiative you can benefit from is the energy comparison service by **Business Australia Energy (BAE)**. It follows an easy three-step process—compare, switch and save. You simply fill in an online contact form, nominate a good time to talk, upload an energy bill and BAE will do the rest. They will find the best energy rate, talk you through your options and, if you decide to switch, you'll be guided through the steps and paperwork will be kept to a minimum. It's a simple and straightforward process.

Swane's Nurseries is a big operation—the flagship nursery in Dural alone is situated on 16 hectares. With the desire to implement more cost-effective energy practices, Swane's recently participated in the BAE service. Finbarr O'Leary, Executive Director, stated “We were able to see what a negotiated energy contract was to look like and aided our decision to make change. The next step is to engage in the free Business Energy Advice Program (BEAP), to look at ways to be more energy efficient that are specific to our industry.”

BEAP and BAE are **free** programs you can tap into to help you make a difference on your energy consumption. You can register for one or both. To register for the Business Energy Advice Program, visit <https://businessenergyadvice.com.au/>, and make sure you insert “NGINA” in the “Who Referred You?” box. To register for the energy comparison service with Business Australia Energy, visit australianbusinessenergy.com.au, and again insert “NGINA” in the “Who Referred You?” box.

To learn more, contact your Business Australia Energy Account Manager, Mark Haines, on 02 9466 4168 or mark.haines@businessaustralia.com.

NGINA has been a member of Business Australia (formerly NSW Business Chamber) since 2007. Through this membership, you have access to resources, support and solutions that will help you be a better employer. Business Australia supports business across the country in areas such as workplace/HR compliance and advice line support, apprenticeships and traineeships, marketing and, from early this year, WHS. We'll be sharing further information with you about these resources over the coming months.

**BUSINESS
AUSTRALIA**



Protecting Pesticides From People

by Martin Horwood, Independent Entomological Consultant

You may be thinking the title of this article is a typo. Wrong. I'm a fan of pesticides.

Like every other human innovation, from cars to capitalism, and all elements of nature, such as evolution or 'survival of the fittest', the brutal theory conceived by Charles Darwin, they aren't perfect.

BUT WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT THEM?

I've worked with pesticides for almost 40 years and have seen the profound benefits they've contributed to Australian plant and animal industries for managing pests and preserving biosecurity, leading to increases in productivity, quality of yields and sustaining agricultural industries. Pesticides also provide immense benefits in many other spheres including human and animal health, protecting man-made structures and making life more pleasant.

What I'm concerned about is a growing realm of anti-pesticide lobbying that has no factual basis yet may impact on the availability of this crucial technology. It's a bit understandable when this is carried out by companies. Their motivation may be to benefit from chemicals being banned and replacing them with new, more lucrative products. But in the general community some anti-pesticide actions seem to be inspired by irrational political correctness that is based on no specific evidence whatsoever.

Back in the 1960s Rachel Carson, the brilliant author of *Silent Spring*, first raised the agenda of the negative impact synthetic pesticides, such as DDT, were having on the environment. This happened when pesticide regulation was

almost unheard of and broad spectrum, long-lasting chemicals like organochlorines were the predominant insecticides used around the world. Since then governments, especially in Australia, have greatly amplified the degree of control exerted on the approval and use of pesticides. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) was established in 1993. Since then, any insecticide, herbicide, fungicide, etc., or veterinary medicine that is sold, supplied or used in Australia must first be registered or obtain permit approval by the APVMA. To be registered, the process may include scientific evaluations of the safety (to users, non-target organisms and the environment) and efficacy (ability to achieve label claims) of the product. Product label directions, which are also controlled by the APVMA, provide the necessary application, safety and handling instructions for use of the product.

Some time ago I worked for the APVMA, as a consultant (specialising in evaluation of termiticidal efficacy), and a full-time employee (product application evaluator). The agency includes a significant team of technical experts including vets, chemists, environmentalists and other scientists who take part in the safety and efficacy assessment processes, and the validation of information on the product label. The APVMA also uses a range of expert consultants from outside the agency for the appraisal of new products.

Due to the APVMA regulatory framework, pesticides now go through a lengthy approval process that ensures products are safe and do what they claim to do. The APVMA also conducts ongoing reviews of product efficacy and safety. If new data

arises about potential for negative health impacts on humans and non-targeted organisms the agency can place partial or total bans on the product and active ingredient, which can lead to the withdrawal of a range of products and prevention of any ongoing use of the chemical. As a consequence of the work done by the APVMA we are in quite a productive regulatory environment for pesticides in Australia.

In recent years, several challenges to pesticides have arisen outside the APVMA. These have included claims about the carcinogenicity of the herbicide glyphosate and the impact of neonicotinoid insecticides on bees.

The safety of glyphosate came under review around the world following the judgement of the Superior Court in California to award damages to a man who alleged that glyphosate-based herbicides caused his cancer. In Australia there were two stories aired on TV (Four Corners in 2018 and 60 Minutes in 2019) emphasising the health concerns surrounding the herbicide, including links between the product and cancer. Both stories were very one sided in their portrayal of facts linking the alleged cause and effect. It's hard to understand why these so-called documentaries took such an unbalanced position on the issue. APVMA issued responses to both stories, declaring that registered products containing glyphosate are safe to use according to label directions and that their regulatory decisions consider large quantities of scientific information including facts from the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer and that their decisions in relation to glyphosate were consistent with that of other regulators in Europe, the USA and Canada.

Last year (2019), Jan Davis, the Executive Officer of Protected Cropping Australia, wrote a great article entitled 'Last Word' in the *Soilless Australia* magazine. Jan was in agreement with APVMA and supportive of glyphosate. Some of the key points she raised were: a report by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) claiming that glyphosate is 'probably carcinogenic' has been discredited; no other herbicide has been subjected to as many rigorous tests and investigations as glyphosate and there is no scientific proof that it has harmed anyone; the use of glyphosate by farmers has kept millions of people alive by allowing sustainable production of more food and fibre from finite land and water resources; an APVMA review of the IARC report concluded that glyphosate doesn't pose a carcinogenic risk to humans; in spite of this we still live in an age where rational science-based evidence struggles to stand against ill-informed opinion; the LD50 of glyphosate and caffeine are 5,600 mg/kg and 192 mg/kg, respectively. Jan hopes you enjoyed that morning coffee!

European Union countries have voted to ban the outdoor use of systemic insecticides known as neonicotinoids because of the harm they can do to bees, but there is no sign of a similar

ban in Australia. The EU ban covers the use of three active ingredients: imidacloprid developed by Bayer CropScience, clothianidin developed by Takeda Chemical Industries and Bayer CropScience, as well as Syngenta's thiamethoxam.

The chemicals are widely used here in Australia but APVMA says there is no evidence of declining bee populations as a result of neonicotinoid application if used according to label directions. As with all pesticides, APVMA has ongoing monitoring procedures and will take action and confront the industry responsible when a risk is identified.

Once again it is good to see evidence-based decisions being made by the Australian pesticide regulator. Banning of products such as imidacloprid would have a disturbing impact on pest control in Australia. The product is systemic and highly active against a wide range of insect pests. Furthermore, it has relatively low human toxicity which makes it ideal for domestic application by homeowners. In spite of APVMA's decision, in 2018 Bunnings ceased trading the product Yates Confidor, which contains the active ingredient imidacloprid.

Another factor compromising the survival of pesticides that are still vital to the community is the expiry of patent protection product registered with APVMA. Patent protection means no other product with the same chemical constituents and label claims can be submitted for registration. The duration of patency is around eight years. Once products are off-patent, 'generic players' are allowed to register similar products mimicking the original registrant. Once this happens, the value of the product drops markedly and companies are much less likely to do any work to protect their products in the marketplace because earnings from sales will be heavily reduced. Moreover, should the original registrant have a new product that could target the same market as an old product, then they may be inclined to actively pursue the removal their old product. In doing so they free up the market once again and ensure that cheap products are no longer available.

While the anti-pesticide lobby is yet to gain a political foothold, at least in Australia, there may be growing circles of this persuasion among the public. Yet another example is people speaking out against the use of 1080 baits for controlling vertebrate pests such as foxes. A colleague working on vertebrate pest control with GSLLS told me that recently there have been thousands of negative comments made about 1080 on websites such as Facebook and change.org. No doubt all anti-pesticide movements will be bloated by social media. I believe industries with strong reliance on pesticides, such as ours, need to remain alert, and publicise their own interests, desirably supported by independent data, so that the public, industries and politicians hear an alternative and more factual point of view.

Welcome to Our New Members



Business owners: Father and son, Mike and Lachlan James

Business name: Essentially Natural

Address: 86 Northview Close, Coolangatta, NSW 2535 (we usually just say Berry, NSW) near Shoalhaven Heads at the mouth of the beautiful Shoalhaven River on the NSW South Coast

Business phone: 0409 552 331

Business email: lachlan@essentiallynatural.com.au

Number of staff: 3

Website: essentiallynatural.com.au



Mike James and some photos taken at Essentially Natural's processing plant

“As a kid I grew up on an acre near Berry, NSW, where we had a small orchard with a variety of fruit trees and a large vegetable garden. Sometime later, after working in warehousing and sales, I found myself working as a gardener for a few years in gardens in northern NSW. My interest in natural goods was fuelled by a friend's knowledge of organic gardening, and I learned a lot about growing organic and natural produce, with a few permaculture tips along the way.

Later on, an opportunity arose to combine my sales background and my love of all things organic to start my own business, Essentially Natural, and market Swift Grow (our very potent organic liquid fertiliser) plus a range of natural mould-control products to the world, so I decided to take it on and build my career in an environmentally friendly way.

Essentially Natural was started by me and my dad, Mike, not only as just a business but as a way for us to do our small bit for the environment. There are so many products that include toxic chemicals or add excessive waste to landfill or are just a waste of money, that we knew there was an opportunity to create an environmentally focused, sustainable business. We had several suppliers that provide high-quality, premium natural products who needed sales and marketing support, so Essentially Natural was born to support that ambition.

Through NGINA, we provide Swift Grow fertiliser, a previously unknown yet high-grade quality fertiliser, that requires only two millilitres per litre, includes a strong NPK suite plus a strong boost of lactobacillus bacteria to strengthen plant health and wellbeing. We have seen everything from citrus trees having no down year, to mango trees putting off fruit in the first year, massive strawberries, epic lettuces, and even a farmer in Lebanon who went from 5 to 19 crates of fruit in a single harvest when he switched to Swift Grow, and even some farmers who add an extra harvest in per year! So clearly, Swift Grow has something very positive to contribute, and we are here to facilitate it.

Essentially Natural also distributes:

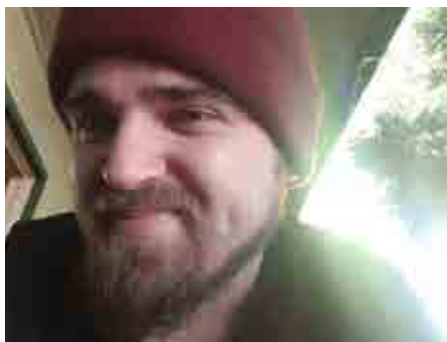
- **Solubag**—a fully biodegradable bag that dissolves in hot water, or landfill, and returns back to carbon from which it was made.
- **Mould Control**—a natural mould removal and prevention range that also sanitises the air in your home.
- **Lean Green**—our signature range of natural cleaning products that are focused on value for money cleaning and sanitisation.

These products can all be found on our website.

Our company aims to have Swift Grow stocked in nurseries around the country, so anyone can easily access a premium fertiliser that revitalises soil quality, rather than stripping it away, like some brands do. Soil degradation is a significant problem that often goes unnoticed until there is an issue.



Lachlan James and his sister Tahlia at a young age helping in the garden



Lachlan James



Leonne James looks after Essentially Natural's stand at Sydney Trade Day in December

Swift Grow is made in Australia from water and the refined poo from totally organically fed barramundi. The barramundi are fed with organic vegetable matter, which provides the nutrients plants need and thrive on, and which boosts nutrients and microbe production that can be lacking in Australian soil.

We also aim to change the perception that multiple fertilisers are required for a basic backyard garden and that fresh food needs to come from a large supermarket. With Swift Grow, no fuss gardening is easier, as gardens produce a greater yield, faster, with less effort and improved food flavour.

Swift Grow improves the microbial and probiotic production in the soil. This has a wonderful flow on effect in that these probiotics are passed on through fresh produce to both humans and animals. For optimal results we recommend fertilising with Swift Grow every 2-3 weeks for the first three months then monthly afterwards for plants to thrive with lush growth.

We care deeply about the planet, and Essentially Natural is our way of contributing and educating for sustainable change. If we all change a few small habits we can have a significant impact. Change is more likely to occur if it is easy to implement and Swift Grow is super easy to use. Customers are looking for natural options more than ever before and now we have a solution.

We thank NGINA for the warm welcome we have received thus far, especially the support from Honeysuckle Nurseries, who has taken to Swift Grow with great enthusiasm! For those who would like to know more, Mike or I will be at Sydney Trade

Day each month. We support our resellers with samples, brochures, an optional retail display stand and quality support. With over 45 years of experience between us in the point-of-sale display business, we are well equipped in retail support. Essentially Natural is a small Australian family business, that offers personal regular support to our customers. We also offer local sales support with local advertising campaigns.

Essentially Natural is about making quality natural products affordable and accessible for local businesses all over the country. This way, we can ensure longevity for our business, our suppliers' and resellers' businesses, and the long-term impact of ecofriendly products nationwide. Supporting the little guy was once an Australian slogan and after this tough pandemic we feel it needs to come back now more than ever. We all need to shop at the local nursery, the local grocer or hardware store, purchasing our needs from people we know, who are also locals supporting locals. Every region has its organic grocer or local farms and markets that produce can be acquired from, and we hope to be part of the change towards buying local, buying Australian and buying natural. A good community thrives when we all support each other.

To all the nurseries, garden centres and growers out there, we are here to support you. Our fertiliser will help you grow happier, healthier and stronger plants. Our cleaning products reduce cost and toxic load on your home or workplace.

Essentially Natural is here to make a positive change and we hope you will join us on the journey to creating a more natural and sustainable Australia!"

Welcome to Our New Members

DESERT Sunday co.

Business owners: Andrew & Amanda Marsh

Business name: Desert Sunday Collective

Address (bricks and mortar): The Green Altar, Shop 2, 148 Parry Street, Newcastle West 2302

Business phone: 0428 540 187

Business email: hello@desertsundaycollective.com.au

Number of staff: 5

Website: desertsundaycollective.com.au

Facebook: @desertsundaycollective

Instagram: @desertsundayco / @thegreenaltar

Andrew and Amanda Marsh began Desert Sunday Collective in August 2016, after their favourite cactus broke into pieces during an interstate move. They were devastated at first to see him come off the truck (he gave the removalist a nasty surprise—a hand full of prickles) but with a hopeful attitude of a new season ahead of them, they propagated him back to life, or as they affectionately say he ‘made babies’. Prior to Desert Sunday, Amanda worked in marketing, and Andrew worked in fundraising and community development.

It was during this time, they lost Andrew’s beloved mum, Julie Ann Marsh, to her fight with brain and breast cancer. Their personal collection helped them deal with their grief, as they spent many hours replanting, loving and nurturing their small plant collection on the floor of Amanda’s dad’s nursery. Julie was a keen gardener and she found much joy in her plants. Many of the plants they had in their personal collection were grown from her garden.

From the beginning, Desert Sunday was always about encountering plants and the benefits they can bring to your life, which has remained a strong value of the business through growing succulents for markets, to expanding into planned plant events and eventually into fixed retail.

Amanda’s parents also run nurseries in the Hunter Valley (INN Ferns & Foliage and Country Elegance Gardens & Gifts). This has given them a great head start in building their micro-nursery and an excellent platform to supply and grow local quality stock.

Their retail space, The Green Altar, is located in Newcastle CBD. Opening in November 2020, this space has allowed their regular customers to easily access their plants, pots and products, either by visiting the space or through their click and collect service.

With the urbanisation of spaces and a rise in apartment living in Newcastle, there is a trend towards urban gardening and connecting with greenery in homes. Desert Sunday Co inspires those interested in indoor plants, urban gardening and wellness, providing them access to quality products and expert advice in the heart of the city.

Their customers range from new plant owners looking for an easy-care house plant to those looking for a hard-to-find variety. Customers aged 25–34 make up approximately 45% of their customer base with the age group 18–24 not too far behind.

Some of the challenges they have faced over past year include the growing pains of running a small business, maintaining positive cash flow during quiet times, sourcing desirable varieties of plants, and balancing work and personal commitments. In order to overcome these challenges, they have split their services and products into three different areas—a physical space, plant curation for workplaces, and





online sales and delivery—while also hiring new staff. By doing this they were able to maintain cash flow during COVID, supplemented with funding from new projects, and free up some time for Amanda to go on maternity leave.

In 2021, Desert Sunday will be running a campaign called ‘A Plant in Every Room’. They hope to engage people from all walks of life to create indoor gardens or to at least have one plant in every room. They will use in-depth information and events to take plant lovers on a journey into the care and benefits of having indoor plants in your life. This campaign has the potential to also gain other work, such as plant curation for workplaces and also the opportunity to engage with young people in local schools.

For the next 12 months, Desert Sunday will also be working on growing their customer experience in their brick and mortar store in Newcastle, with the desire to open a second space the following year. They will be planning creative events such as a plant exhibition with an artist and seminars for schools, to enlighten and engage the wider community with their love of all things green and growing.

One of the sayings they spoke about when asked what keeps them in balance is “stay in your own lane, if you look sideways you will surely fall on your face.” They believe it’s important to always focus on what you do well and not compare your business to others. Do what you do well and everything else will follow.

Andrew and Amanda are extremely passionate about reaching the next generation of gardeners and they are most excited about having conversations with young people and



Andrew and Amanda Marsh



their growing love for plants. Having experienced the joy, satisfaction and sense of safety plants bring, they believe they are a tool and catalyst for healing, hope and community in young people's lives.

They attribute their success to their mentors and Amanda's parents Steve and Janice, to their experience with media and marketing, and also their ability to remain progressive by putting legs on any new ideas they have.

In the past two years, with a commitment to giving back, they have contributed close to \$20,000 to local grassroots charities, through their 'Plants for People' initiative. These funds were raised in partnership with their customers, by donating 10% of plant sales from a specific event.

One piece of advice they would give to a young person starting out in the industry is to find a mentor with relevant experience. Learn as much as you can about the industry through people, be open to advice and seek help when you need it. And for any older person who has been in the industry for a long time, consider mentoring a young person or thinking about your succession plan. Don't let your life's work, passion and experience get lost!

The couple jokingly say they are part of a crazy plant family. Andrew and Amanda love plants that much, a week after their son was born they signed a lease for a retail space! Maybe he will join the industry one day.

Welcome to Andrew and Amanda from Desert Sunday Collective!





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-	-	25	5	\$52.00	\$57.20
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