

NGIA CLIPPINGS

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This month's Nursery Paper...

Reducing the water weed risk

How government and industry can contribute to a safer trade

Aquatic plants make a beautiful addition to fish ponds and water features but several species pose a major threat to Australia's waterways and water resources.

In 2004, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) joined the National Aquatic Weeds Management Group (NAWMG) to help implement a range of initiatives designed to tackle the issue of aquatic weeds. One such project is a weed risk assessment of water plants sold in aquariums and nurseries. This project aims to identify future water weed threats and remove such plants from sale.

This Nursery Paper will explore the water weed issue in Australia. It provides an overview of the weed risk assessment process and explores its meaning and implications for the nursery and garden industry.

Looking for a 'green' expert this World Environment Day? Visit your local garden centre

Throughout the month of June, garden retailers participating in the Nursery & Garden Industry World Environment Day promotion will be a destination for Australians seeking a 'green' expert in their local community.

In celebration of World Environment Day on June 5th, the nursery and garden industry has launched a new Environmental Resource Kit for garden retailers. Promoted as 'Our Environment, Your Backyard' under the Life is a Garden brand, the kit gives retailers the tools to show new and experienced gardeners that the best place to start making a difference to the environment is in your own backyard.

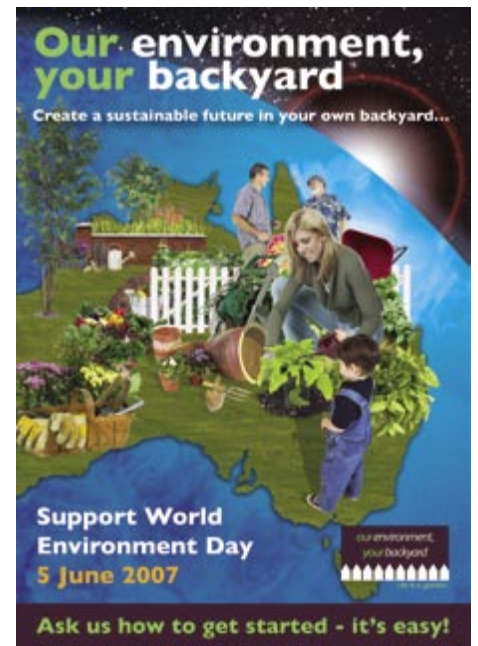
Newspoll research commissioned by the industry last year found that 9 out of 10 Australians wanted an environmentally friendly, sustainable garden. The industry is ideally placed to help gardeners and homeowners achieve this goal and make a difference in their own backyard.

To assist the promotion, a review of research supporting the value of green-life has also been commissioned by the industry.

"The industry is committed to providing credible and expert information to Australians about how they can minimise their footprint on the earth and ensure a greener future for generations to come," said national communications & PR manager Tracey Wigg.

The resource kit is full of green ideas for the garden retailer to help educate consumers. It includes eye-catching point of sale posters, worksheets and a range of display, promotional and workshop ideas to highlight the benefits of plants, water conservation, composting and recycling.

The strategy will be supported by an ongoing public relations campaign promoting the green credentials of the industry.



For more information about Nursery & Garden Industry Environmental Marketing, contact National Communications & PR Manager Tracey Wigg on ph: 02 9876 5200 or email: tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au.



Life is a garden now direct to your inbox

Commencing this month, garden lovers all over Australia will receive the latest updates from the Life is a Garden website directly to their inboxes.

Delivered via a new bi-monthly e-newsletter, content will include information on current consumer-oriented promotions, details of Nursery & Garden Industry-supported events, gardening hints and tips, the latest website updates, plus links to the month's feature 'garden recipe'.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for our industry to strengthen its relationship with an enthusiastic and dedicated consumer audience," said national communications & PR manager Tracey Wigg.

Launched at the end of July 2006, the website has already attracted hundreds of subscribers during this short 10-month lifespan.

The inaugural June edition of the Life is a Garden e-bulletin features the Nursery & Garden Industry World Environment Day promotion. Aimed at people who want to make a positive impact on the environment, the e-bulletin encourages Australians to visit their local participating garden centre during the month of June to find out how to start making a difference in their own backyard.

NGIA welcomes new President Geoff Richards

Geoff Richards from Western Australia has been announced as the new President of Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) following the Annual General Meeting held in Queensland this month.

Managing director of Richgro Garden Products, Geoff also served as National President from 1999 through to 2002 and was made an NGIA Life Member in 2005 in recognition of his continued leadership, dedication and service to the nursery and garden industry.

He is looking forward to the challenge of leading NGIA through the exciting and sometimes difficult times ahead.

"Many issues are impacting on our industry as we move into the future. While they often seem daunting, they also give us the opportunity to improve how we operate to open new doors and business opportunities," said Geoff.

He also emphasises the need for cooperation between all industry members and stakeholders to secure a profitable future for the industry.

"Our task is to grow business, promote our horticultural expertise and educate consumers and government about the benefits of green-life in our environment. Moving forward requires all players to work together as a united and sustainable industry," said Geoff.

Stuart Swaddling, from NSW, steps down after two years as National President, but remains on the Board to serve the remainder of his third two year term.



New NGIA President Geoff Richards.

State Conferences highlight benefits of Yates Garden Industry Awards



With the 2008 Yates Nursery & Garden Industry (NGI) Awards open for entries, both the NSW/ACT and Tasmanian NGI Associations have taken the opportunity to highlight the benefits of participating in the Awards at their state conferences.

Nursery & Garden Industry Victoria President John van der Horst, owner of Acorn Nursery (Vic) and inaugural Hall of Fame inductee, described the excitement and motivation his team experienced during their involvement in the Awards. Acknowledging the hard work of his team in achieving three consecutive wins, John said, "It's not my award. It's Acorn's award and therefore, the staff's award."

According to John, the entry process was particularly valuable in drawing attention to where improvements could be made to the business.

Acorn customers also celebrated their win.

"Our customers love it," added John. "They love to shop at the best garden centre in Australia."

In Tasmania, Estelle Cornell of Hall of Fame inductee Allora Gardens Nursery (NT) and Tim Pickles of Best Large Garden Centre in Australia, Tim's Garden Centre (NSW), shared their Awards experience with delegates.

Tim highlighted the ways in which winning the State and National Awards has provided promotional opportunities to his business while Estelle emphasised the enthusiasm and drive the Awards gave both her and her staff at Allora.

"Continually striving to be the best and actually achieving 'the best' has been a wonderful experience," said a beaming Estelle.

For more information visit the 2008 Awards website via www.ngia.com.au.

Innovative, quality training – who you gonna call? Your state association!



There's never been a better time to get in touch with your state association to find out about the training initiatives on offer. Whether it's some much-needed inspiration to create stunning displays to woo your customers or you want to become the local expert on pests and diseases in the backyard, chances are your state association will have just what you need.

Aligned with the industry's training strategy of 'planning nationally, delivering locally', the impressive array of workshops being run by your State Nursery & Garden Industry Associations is a result of your industry investment through the nursery or 'pot' levy.

And remember – any State Association training you complete earns CNP activity credits, which you can accumulate even if you're not yet a CNP. So don't be the only one not building up your skills and knowledge – call your State Association today.

Below are highlights from some of the most popular and successful industry workshops being offered across Australia:

Pest & Disease Workshop (Nursery & Garden Industry Tasmania)

Around ninety people attended NGIT's Pest & Disease Workshop in Tasmania. The keynote speakers were Judy Horton, communications manager from Yates Australia, and Margaret Williams, manager of diagnostic services, biosecurity and product integrity for the department of primary industry and water (DPIT).

Praising the speakers, NGIT CEO Wayne Cole said, "Judy gave a first-rate presentation on the most common pests and diseases that our industry is exposed to. Margaret then followed this up by explaining the new national and state-wide biosecurity plans and in particular, the role our industry can play in this area."

Visual Merchandising (Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT)

The feedback from NGINA's Visual Merchandising workshop has been overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees walking away inspired to make the changes they've been putting off. Run by Debra Templar, this workshop has been offered in response to industry demands for training in visual merchandising.

"Debra Templar is a vibrant, motivational speaker," said NGINA Business Development Officer, Bob Wynyard. "She has a real talent for inspiring people to go back to their businesses and actually make changes to how they stimulate customer interest through their product displays."



'Vibrant and motivating' – Debra Templar inspires participants with innovative display ideas at NGINA's Visual Merchandising workshop.

Smart Management Training (Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland)

This initiative is testament to NGIQ's commitment to providing training to members no matter where they live in Queensland.

Facilitated by the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) and funded by FarmBis, Smart Management Training is aimed at senior business managers and covers strategic business planning, managing people and performance as well as financial management and budgeting.

The workshop is being run in several locations around Queensland. According to NGIQ Business Development Officer Sharon Ible, it was "quite a coup to get an organisation of AIM's calibre to run a workshop in so many of the smaller regional areas."

HAL focuses on National Water Plan

Securing water for horticulture was in the industry spotlight last month at the Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) Horticulture Water Initiative (HWI) Steering Committee meeting.

The focus was on an initial assessment of the 10 key points of the National Water Plan. The committee considered the \$10 billion on offer and how this should be spent across all horticulture, rather than just the Murray Darling Basin (MDB).

The committee also looked at the implications of the drought for the MDB. The MDB Commission has identified two key water allocation periods:

1. July to November 2007 – starting allocation has a high probability of zero percent.
2. Post November 2007 – allocation will be reassessed with the aim of 50-70 percent if there is above-average rainfall.

Major HWI priorities for the MDB are:

- Permanent planting priority
- Recovery packages
- Exceptional circumstances packages
- Speedy information sharing to inform growers of likely water availability
- Contribution to MDBC contingency.

For more information contact NGINA Nursery Industry Development Officer Michael Danelon on ph: 02 9679 1472 or email michael@ngina.com.au.

Upcoming events

12 & 20 June
NGINA Visual Merchandising
Newcastle (12th) & Port Macquarie (20th)
Ph: Rosemary Buckley
02 9679 1472
info@ngina.com.au

13 June
NGINT Tendering Essentials
Katherine, NT
Ph: Jane Dellow
08 8999 6888
www.nt.gov.au/upskills

13 June
NGIQ Conference
Townsville, Qld
Ph: Sarah Manser
07 3277 7900
sarah@ngiq.asn.au

14 June
NGINA OH&S Training
Rouse Hill, NSW
Ph: Rosemary Buckley
02 9679 1472
info@ngina.com.au

14 June
NGINT E-Marketing
Darwin, NT
Ph: Jane Dellow
08 8999 6888
www.nt.gov.au/upskills

19 June
NGINT Managing Staff Performance
Darwin, NT
Ph: Jane Dellow
08 8999 6888
www.nt.gov.au/upskills

19-21 June
NGIQ Smart Management Training
Gold Coast, Qld
Ph: Sarah Manser
07 3277 7900
sarah@ngiq.asn.au

20 June
NGISA State Conference
Seaton, SA
Ph: Geoffrey Fuller
08 8372 6822
gfuller@ngisa.com.au

What's in your pot? Draft National Plant Labelling Guide released

Do you know what's in your pot? To make sure consumers get the right answer, the Industry has been working hard to set the record straight on plant labelling.

A new National Plant Labelling Guide has been completed and is now being circulated to industry and interested parties for review and comment.

"Currently the Nursery & Garden Industry has no formal code of practice or guidelines for the labelling of retail plants," said Robert Prince, National Environmental Policy Manager at Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA).

Drafted by Tree & Shrub Growers Victoria in conjunction with industry organisations and a specialist legal team, the Guide details how plants should be labelled. Information displayed on the label includes the correct botanical name, any legal representation and a warning if the plant is potentially harmful.

"While labels are often the key promotional device attached to plants to attract the consumer, they are frequently also the only information provided for a plant. This is why the issue of plant labelling is so important for the industry," said Robert.

"Including standard information on plant labels will help the industry and consumers stay informed and assist plant producers in meeting their legal obligations.

"The introduction of measures to ensure consistent labelling in all areas of plant promotion will greatly assist the industry and general public in becoming more aware over time."

NGIA hopes to have the guidelines nationally accepted by early July, following a review period of five weeks. While the guidelines will be voluntary, industry organisations and leaders expect widespread adoption.

The Guide suggests that labels include the following:

- Correct botanical name, written in the correct manner and style
- Correct presentation of legal protection – plant breeders rights and trademarks
- Correct horticultural data on growth habit and requirements
- Recommended wording for potentially harmful plants.

Correct plant identification is essential for addressing issues such as plant invasiveness and biosecurity incursions as well as for comparative studies such as water use.

Health statements are also vitally important as some plants, despite providing numerous environmental and aesthetic benefits, can be harmful if ingested or misused.

To obtain a copy of the draft National Plant Labelling Guide contact Robert Prince at NGIA on ph: 02 9876 5200 or email: robert.prince@ngia.com.au.



The new draft National Plant Labelling Guidelines recommend the inclusion of standard information on labels in all areas of plant promotion.