

NGIA CLIPPINGS

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This month's Nursery Paper... Avoiding the discount addiction

To understand the full impact of continual discounting, it is useful to think of discounting as having addictive properties for both businesses and consumers.

This Nursery Paper explores the causes, consequences and cure for the widespread 'addiction' to discounting suffered by many Australian retailers. Based on the work of Michael Cleghorn, renowned international trends forecaster and Director of Minc Consulting, the paper examines the consequences of feeding the discount addiction and the changing retail climate that has encouraged its spread. It concludes by outlining a number of practical strategies for avoiding the discount addiction and succeeding in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Australians favour sustainable gardens: latest research



The latest Newspoll research on Australians and their gardens has found that increasing environmental awareness is boosting the appeal of sustainable gardens and environmentally-friendly garden practices among Australians.

The survey of over 1200 people revealed that a staggering 90% of Australians find the sustainable, environmentally-friendly garden to be the most appealing.

According to national communications & PR manager Tracey Wigg, these findings confirm that the garden still holds pride of place in the Australian way of life.

"Overall the survey shows Australian love their gardens, whether it's to simply enjoy the great outdoors, grow their own food, entertain or make a positive impact on the environment."

The study, commissioned by Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) last month, also revealed the following:

Australians are environmentally aware

- In the knowledge that trees and shrubs are natural air filters, 37% of Australians are willing to plant more green life to offset carbon emissions for a healthier environment
- Australians are prepared to:
 - Use water efficient products – 74%
 - Plant water-wise plants – 70%
 - Have compost bins or worm farms – 52%

In regards to style

- 82% found a native garden with plants suited to their local environment most appealing
- 71% of Australians found a produce garden with a range of herbs and vegetables appealing regardless of the size of their garden
- An amazing 60% of Australians stated that a designer garden was not appealing.

In relation to how people use their gardens

- 67% stated that the main use of their garden is to take time out and relax
- 58% of Australians still get the most enjoyment from their garden by actually getting their hands dirty - planting and potting.

For further about this research, contact Tracey Wigg at NGIA on ph: 02 9876 5200 or email tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au.



Sustainability and the environment are at the top of the agenda for Australians who love their gardens.

'Gardens are food for the soul' - Life is a Garden PR launch



The Life is a Garden PR campaign was launched to lifestyle, food and horticultural media in a Sydney harbourside venue on 11th July.

According to national communications and PR manager Tracey Wigg, the event was designed to showcase the talent in the industry and illustrate how gardens play an important role in the Australian lifestyle.

"The materials generated from the launch, including the Spring Trends and Newspoll research, will help drive the industry public relations campaign to print and broadcast media nationally," she said. "The aim is to generate stories to drive consumers back into their gardens and into garden retailer centres for inspiration and expertise."

In line with the theme, 'Gardens are food for the soul', the venue was transformed by talented horticulturists and media identities Linda Ross and Meredith Kirton to emphasise the modern ideal of organic self-sufficiency. With the assistance of several industry businesses, which generously supplied plants, pots, mulch and lighting, Linda and Meredith took a contemporary spin on the medieval notion of paradise in the orchard and the biblical Garden of Eden.

Guests attended from a wide range of media, including Woman's Day, New Woman, Gourmet Traveller, Sydney Morning Herald, Australia's Best Backyards, Better Homes & Gardens, Radio 2GB, ABC Radio, Gardening Australia TV, Notebook and New Idea.



NGIA released the 2007/08 Spring Trends and the results of the latest Newspoll research to representatives of Australia's garden and lifestyle media last month.



'Gardens are food for the soul' was the theme of the 2007 Life is a garden PR launch, held at a harbourside venue in Sydney.



Vignette displays at the Life is a garden launch were designed to evoke each of the five senses – sight, sound, taste, touch and smell.

NGIA announces latest Spring trends

"Australians are becoming fascinated once again with growing their own fruits and vegetables, plant and pick, from fork to fork...With the increasing spotlight on our carbon footprint and organics, home food production will become de rigeur! There is nothing more nourishing to the soul than growing your own food."

- Linda Ross, 2GB garden radio program and author of 'Design your Garden' and 'Create a sun-smart water-wise garden'

The Nursery & Garden Industry is pleased to announce the 2007/08 Spring gardening trends:

1. Diversity – There is a growing complexity and depth in gardens. Just as this season's fashions are all about texture, pattern, layers and detail, so too gardens are becoming more adventurous.
2. Sustainability and the environment – We can all make our footprints lighter on the earth with simple infrastructure considerations around issues like water, weeds, chemicals, water-wise plants, recycling and habitat.
3. Spiritual/Sanctuary – More people view their garden as their own sanctuary, a place for self reflection and contemplation.
4. Edible Garden - Established by a new breed of food and garden lover, the 'garden foodie' is inspired by taste, variety and creativity.
5. Multicultural – With Australia's multicultural nation, many communities are finding their own voice through the expression of background and culture in the garden.
6. Outdoor Room –With the increase in home and garden improvement shows, more people are putting time and effort into making their garden an extension of their home.

Australian Government recognises industry expertise

The Australian Government has sponsored an invasive plant awareness campaign in partnership with the Nursery & Garden Industry.

In a letter to the industry from The Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, and Senator The Hon Eric Abetz, Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, the Australian Government has engaged the industry to "provide a shop-front for the key messages of the Defeating the Weeds Menace program."

The nursery and garden industry will play this important role "by providing information and advice to the public on invasive plants and possible alternatives."

As part of this initiative, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) has developed an Expert Invasive Plant Marketing Resource for retailers to assist them in educating their customers. The government advertising and marketing campaign comprising national radio and print advertising will drive customers into stores, giving all retailers the opportunity to position themselves as the local 'weed expert'.

According to national environmental policy manager Robert Prince, the program gives retailers and plant producers some fantastic business opportunities.

"It's all about advising on appropriate and responsible planting, garden management and green waste disposal," said Robert.

"This in turn can lead to increased green-life sales, consultation on garden retro-fits and sale of allied products – weed killers, compost bins and mulches," he added.

For more information or to order your Invasive Plants Resource contact NGIA on ph: 02 9876 5200.



Australian Government Defeating the Weed Menace

Taking a stand with governments – Conference 2008



The 2008 Adelaide conference for NGIA promises to be both challenging and enjoyable, reports Chairperson Malcolm Lewis.

"It is time our industry recognised its importance in our community and made its case to governments of all persuasions. Most critical is the need to promote the fact that we are part of the solution when it comes to issues such as climate change," said Malcolm.

The theme of the conference, 'Seachange for an Essential Industry', reflects this pressing issue.

One key speaker will be Dr Will Healy from the Ball Corporation. Based in the US, Dr Healy travels the world for the Ball Corporation, looking at plant and general gardening trends. Dr Healy will be discussing these trends, including the '5th room' concept, at the national conference.

"It is hoped that a strong message will eventuate from the conference to show the industry needs to be consulted and involved in the decision making processes of government," Malcolm added.

In addition to the tour day, a range of technical sessions will offer practical advice and 'hands-on' information.

Put the conference dates of March 26 –28 in your diary now. For further information contact NGIA Development & Event Coordinator, Kobie Keenan, on (02) 9876 5200 or kobie.keenan@ngia.com.au.

Benalla Botanica Horticultural Conference

Benalla Botanica's national conference, themed 'Gardens in a Changing Climate', is being held from 26-28 October at Benalla Performing Arts Centre, Benalla. Featuring outstanding international and national designers and horticulturalists, the conference provides a great opportunity to participate in an innovative, stimulating and relaxing event for both garden lovers and garden professionals.

Conference delegates will be impressed and inspired by keynote speaker Dan Hinkley, the world's most exciting modern day plant hunter. Renowned expert and collector of botanical rarities, this endeavour has led Dan to the wilds of China, South & Central America, Asia, South Africa and Tasmania. Dan writes frequently for American gardening journals, has published two books and is a regular contributor to Martha Stewart Living magazine & television program.

Other participants include Conference MC Michael McCoy, one of Australia's most knowledgeable and engaging garden writers/designers and Peter Nixon of award-winning Paradisus Garden Design, which designs and constructs sustainable gardens for domestic clients.

For more information or to book your place, contact Conference Convenor Jane Grimwade on ph: 03 5762 2792 or email: grimwade@netc.net.au.

Upcoming events

Throughout August NGIQ Smart Management Training

Various locations and dates, Qld
Ph: Sarah Manser
07 3277 7900
sarah@ngiq.asn.au

5-9 August Reed Exhibitions Gift Trade Fair

Melbourne, Vic
Ph: 02 9422 2500
www.giftfairs.com.au

9 August NGIQ Waterwork Workshops

Brisbane West, Qld
Ph: Sarah Manser
07 3277 7900
sarah@ngiq.asn.au

9 August NGINA Waterwork Workshops for Garden Centres

Orange, NSW
Ph: Rosemary Buckley
02 9679 1472
info@ngina.com.au

9 August NGIT First Aid Training Course

Hobart, Tas
Ph: Wayne Cole
02 6244 7977
ngit@bigpond.com.au

11-12 August NGINT Tropical Garden Spectacular

George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, NT
Ph: Jane Dellow
08 8983 3233
ngint@ntha.com.au

14 August NGINA OH&S Training

Rouse Hill, NSW
Ph: Rosemary Buckley
02 9679 1472
info@ngina.com.au

14 August NGISA Cash Flow Management

Netherby, SA
Ph: Geoffrey Fuller
08 8372 6822
gfuller@ngisa.com.au

29-31 August Landscape Australia Expo

Melbourne Showgrounds, Melbourne
Ph: Peter Nissen
02 9416 2855
info@landscapeexpo.com.au

CEO's Corner: 2007/08 levy investment plan



As we head into a new financial year, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) faces the annual challenge of commencing to implement the activities planned for the year as part of the annual levy investment plan. With levy receipts down for 2006/07 and projected to remain down, we have had to significantly change and prune plans for 2007/08.

At the top of the list is the decision – and a decision not taken lightly – not to allocate any funds in 2007/8 to paid advertising. With the unsuccessful bid to increase the marketing levy still so recently behind us, there is simply not enough money to put into market an effective paid campaign every year. Even with the close-to-half a million dollars successfully spent in 2006/7, we have but scratched the surface of consumer awareness. Therefore, while it is disappointing not to be able to follow the campaign with paid advertising, the best bang for the marketing buck in a tight budget year is a strong public relations approach. Already, our first activity in the PR arena – the July launch of our Life is a Garden Spring messages – has yielded great dividends in the form of media interviews and stories.

The 2007/8 plan has a strong emphasis on the environment. The twofold aim is to summarise strong scientific evidence in support of our environmental claims and to run a forum that brings together environmental leaders to focus on the benefits of our industry.

Training and recognition remain key planks, building on last year's success, which saw a significant increase in workshop participation. A major focus this year will be on career planning and attracting people to work in our industry.

KidsGrow, industry accreditation, environmental management systems and research also remain key elements in 2007/08, although spending in some of these areas has been limited by the reduction in levy income.

A reduced levy means less funding from government matching for many industry projects. Of course, projects that rely on voluntary contributions such as conferences, awards and state publications are less affected.

For the levy payers, keep an eye out for a separate publication, 'Your Levy at Work', which will provide more details on expenditure plans for 2007/8. This will also be made available on the NGI website www.ngia.com.au.

Regards
Jenny Lambert



The 2006/07 Life is a garden paid advertising campaign will not be followed up in 2007/08.