

NGIA CLIPPINGS

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This month's Nursery Paper... Assessment of hand watering in production and retail nurseries

During 2008, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) commissioned the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland (DPI&F, Qld) to evaluate and quantify the efficiency of hand watering against other irrigation methodologies.

In this month's Nursery Paper, Dr. Rachel Poulter, DPI&F, Qld presents the results from this study.



Get down and dirty at the 2009 Conference & Symposium! Don't miss out



Nursery & Garden Industry 09
National Conference and Exhibition



The 2009 Nursery & Garden Industry Conference and the inaugural Urban GreenScapes Symposium, to be held at the National Convention Centre from February 17 to 19, will be events not to be missed.

With a mix of international speakers and local experts the focus of both will be about assuring a lucrative and sustainable future for the production and sale of green-life in Australia and providing practical take-home tips to maximise your own profits.

According to NGIA CEO Robert Prince, this year's event will be like no other.

"The emphasis of the event is to encourage stakeholders and industry to work towards unity, to aspire to a stronger industry that has increasing relevance in the Australian lifestyle," Robert says.

Whether you are a retailer or a grower, the objective is to provide a tool-box of strategies and ideas to implement in the long and short term to strengthen your business.

"I know many of us are concerned with the immediate economic future for our own businesses and the industry as a whole; our experts will present some business tools and ideas to help tackle some of the challenges ahead."

Don't forget profit is not a dirty word! Register online at www.ngia.com.au or phone Conference solutions 02) 6285-3000 to secure your place at this exciting industry event.



Consumers encouraged to have a dirty Valentine's Day weekend

For this year's Life is a garden Valentine's Day public relations campaign, consumers are encouraged to have a dirty weekend with their "special someone" by celebrating the day in their own backyard.

Melissa King, author of Garden Feast and ambassador for Nursery & Garden Industry Australia, is the face behind the campaign. Melissa says: "My partner Alex and I love getting our hands dirty! Whether we're re-styling the balcony, hosting a barbeque with home-grown ingredients or just fooling around like kids, getting physical in the garden can be so much fun!"

Melissa goes on to say: "Try something out of ordinary with your other half, and you will be surprised by how receptive they are to getting experimental in the garden."

For a date that is sure to surprise, Australians are encouraged to take their partners on an outing to their local garden retailer to pick out new flowers and herbs for Valentine's Day planting, or to give a gift of love that will bloom for years to come and present their sweetheart with a potted plant, instead of cut flowers.

Life is a garden.



Author of 'Garden Feast' Melissa King and partner Alex encourage consumers to enjoy some time out in the garden with their loved ones this Valentine's Day, as part of the Life is a garden PR campaign.

Queensland CEO looks for industry opportunities in India

In the Nursery & Garden Industry Strategic Plan 2006-08, nursery export was identified as a way to grow the industry. This implied that new market opportunities should be identified and developed.

Because of this, Don Scotts, CEO of Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland visited New Delhi to attend the Third International Landscape & Gardening Expo. The aims of the trip were to:

- Scope the size of the Indian nursery industry, particularly the industry in the New Delhi area
- Identify the opportunities for the export of plants to India in terms of possible species and businesses that might be receptive to ordering from Australia
- Locate possible joint venture partners for bilateral trade
- Determine whether the Landscape & Gardening Expo is a suitable entry point for Australian nurseries wishing to do business in India
- Identify any plant species in India that may be suitable for growing in Australia including tissue culture facilities

According to Don, the Third International Landscape & Gardening Expo was relatively small in size with the emphasis more on cut flowers. "Unfortunately there were no local nurseries exhibiting."

However, the West Bengal Nursery Association had individual and combined stands representing over 150 nurseries in the West Bengal area (about 100 km from New Delhi). The Hyderabad Nursery Consortium also had a combined display representing 22 nurseries that operate a combined market place under the brand name Flora Park (this is about 1400 km from New Delhi).

"The plants on display at the Expo represented about 60 plant species in total which was a bit disappointing." Don says. "There was no apparent interest in the importation of different species from Australia and it was difficult to identify any specific trade opportunities."

For these reasons, the NGIQ CEO would not recommend that the Australian nursery & garden industry participate in the Fourth International Landscape & Garden Expo.

Aside from the Expo, Don made a number of appointments with nurseries before leaving Australia. "In most cases the nursery stock

was ordinary with very little emphasis on plant hygiene and there was no indication that the industry or individual nurseries were seeking to improve their standards." However, he says New Delhi's sub-tropical environment meant good plant growth rates.

No plant species were identified by Don that were not already available in Australia. "The use of soil in the growing of their plants would also prevent importation into Australia unless they are grown in a soilless media and/or bare rooted prior to dispatch."

He says tissue culture facilities in India are variable but the low labour costs may make it viable to have them micropropagate Australian based plant material. "There has been no investigation into the phytosanitary requirements of plant exports to India."

In conclusion, Don believes New Delhi would not be a good starting point for entry into the nursery industry in India. "Hyderabad or Bangalore may be better options."



Plants on display at the Third International Landscape and Garden Expo in India.



A nursery in the New Delhi area.

AgriFood Industry Environmental Scan

AgriFood Skills Australia (formerly the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council) is conducting national consultations with key industry groups (including NGIA), enterprises, training organisations, educators and government leaders in all states and territories to prepare content of the Environmental Scan 2009.

This project represents their major consultative activity for the start of 2009 to provide a contemporary overview of all AgriFood industries, including the rural sector in which amenity (or lifestyle) horticulture is placed. This Environmental Scan is crucially important for industry,

trainers, governments and the council and its partners, in order to come to terms with the national demand for skilled workers. It reflects the current state of change in the industry as it confronts skills and personnel shortages, droughts, water restrictions, market fluctuations and economic impacts.

The Environmental Scan provides analysis sector by sector and a national overview.

AgriFood, through the consultation process, will canvass Vocational Education & Training (VET) and related policy impediments that could be hindering growth and productivity. They will advise all stakeholders when the new edition is ready.

A key element of the consultation process is the NATIONAL SURVEY. The survey results will complement the face-to-face national consultations and provide them with important statistical data that will assist AgriFood to develop its strategies and activities with their Board of Directors and AgriFood's five Industry Standing Committees (of which NGIA is represented).

For further information on the National Survey and the Environmental Scan go to the AgriFood website www.agrifoodskills.net.au or call them on (02) 6163 7200.

Citrus canker eradicated from Queensland

On January 23, the state of Queensland was officially declared free of citrus canker, a disease which causes lesions on citrus leaves, trees and fruit.

The disease has been eradicated from Emerald in central Queensland, where it was first detected in 2004.

During the outbreak, more than half a million citrus trees had to be destroyed, crippling the citrus industry and associated businesses in and around the region.

About 19,000 citrus trees have been replanted in the Emerald area over the past 18 months, with the first fruit looking to be harvested in the next few months.

The National Management Group (NMG), made up of federal and affected state/territory and industry representatives, accepted a recommendation from the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEP) that Emerald be officially declared free of citrus canker.

This declaration means all restrictions placed on the movement of citrus and other host material into, and out of the Emerald Pest Quarantine Area will be lifted.

Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) CEO Robert Prince says: "As a member of the National Management Group, NGIA fully endorses the recommendations made by the CCEPP and congratulates all those involved in the eradication operation."

President's Comment

I have just spent the third week of January with AgriFood Skills Australia updating the Environmental Skills Scan in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. This was part of a national assessment of skills due for delivery to Government in February. The Federal Government has set aside \$11.2 billion over three years to 'Skill Australia', and we, the nursery and garden industry, need our share.

On another note, I believe our political leaders have a lot to answer for in talking up the economic gloom to the point of self-fulfilling prophecy. We all know how difficult it has been to attract good labour but in tougher economic times people spend more time in their homes and gardens with sales opportunities increased. NGIA is working hard through its Life is a garden PR campaign, to get this message through.

In Australia, the lifestyle horticulture sector (of which the nursery industry is the largest component) rates number six in the world, bringing in just over \$5 billion, with the top 14 countries accounting for 92% of world economic impacts for lifestyle horticulture. Thus our industry is a very valuable component of the Australian economy, often forgotten by the governments of today.

Speaking of important industry issues, another is the nursery industry levy, which is vital to the industry's future. The levy is in place to increase the sale of plant material. The commencement of the levy saw our industry associates capitalise on it to the point of dependency. As the debate about its use 'to increase the sale of plants' has become more focused, the industry associations are being forced to restructure, thus reducing their dependence on the levy.

The outlook for the nursery industry is positive. Let us all work hard to capitalise on the opportunities in the current marketplace, keep up to date, read the information sent out by your industry association, participate in industry events and attend National Conference in Canberra to not only learn of the latest trends and technology, but show our politicians that the nursery and garden industry is important to the economy and community.



Geoff Richards
NGIA President

Upcoming events

February 17
2009 Urban GreenScapes Symposium
 Canberra, ACT
 Ph: Tracey Wigg
 02 9876 5200
 Email: tracey.wigg@ngia.com.au
www.ngia.com.au

February 18
NGIQ Trade Day
 Brisbane, QLD
 Ph: Sarah Manser
 07 3277 7900
 Email: info@ngiq.asn.au

February 18 - 19
NGIA National Conference & Exhibition
Ingredients for a Brighter Future
 Canberra, ACT
 Ph: Conference Solutions
 02 6285 3000
www.ngia.com.au

February 21 - 24
Gift & Homewares Australia Trade Fair (GHA) Sydney
 Sydney, NSW
 Ph: Gift & Homewares Australia
 02 9763 3222
www.agha.com.au

February 21 - 25
Gift Fair Sydney
 Sydney, NSW
 Ph: Reed Exhibitions
 02 9422 2777
www.giftfairs.com.au

February 22
The Hills District Open Day
 Sydney, NSW
 Ph: David Banks
 02 9674 4720
david@hillsdistrictorchids.com

March 3
NGIV Trade Day
 Melbourne, VIC
 Ph: NGIV
 03 9576 0599
 Email: ngiv@ngiv.com.au

March 4
NGIV OH&S Training
 Melbourne, VIC
 Ph: Marjorie McLaine
 03 9576 0599
 Email: ngiv@ngiv.com.au

Industry related apprentice & trainee statistics



Recently the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) released a publication presenting estimates of apprentice and trainee activity in Australia for the quarter ending June 30 2008. Many of the figures seemed very low and Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) was interested to know just where the horticulture sector was placed in this mass of figures and tables. We requested a targeted report for the horticulture sector and found some interesting figures.

In the 12 months to June 2008:

- 393 completions of RTF30103 Certificate III in Horticulture - (436 previous year)
- 10 completions of RTF30503 Cert III in Hort (Retail Nursery) - (15 previous year)
- 44 completions of RTF30603 Cert III in Hort (Production Nursery) - (24 previous year)

- 201 completions of RTF303403 Cert III in Hort (Landscaping) - (87 previous year)
- 196 completions of RTF30703 Cert III in Hort (Parks & Gardens) - (75 previous year)

It is interesting to note the growth in the parks & gardens and landscape qualifications, with a decrease in the other qualifications.

In March 2009 NGIA will launch a national careers program which aims to increase awareness of various industry career options. This campaign will commence with the launch of a dedicated careers website.

If you are interested in viewing the full report which contains the statistics listed above, this can be found on the 'Resources' section of the 'Training & Recognition' part of the NGIA website www.ngia.com.au/training/resource_links.asp



The Garden Industry mark of approval

Membership of the Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) program continues to grow, with 250 industry personnel having applied and been accepted into the program thus far.

The CNP mark formally recognises an individual's qualifications, experience and expertise in their sector of the nursery & garden industry, with both Specialist and Professional categories.

There has been significant growth in the understanding of the program's value and its benefits, made evident by a 99% average yearly increase in CNP member numbers over the past three years.

To ensure the credibility of the program, stringent checks on qualifications and experience are carried out on all applicants. Although some applications are not accepted the first time they apply, it is encouraging to see those who have

been short on experience re-applying after they have fulfilled the requirements for CNP membership.

Many industry businesses are now using the CNP program as a way of rewarding their experienced employees and using this credible recognition to promote the expertise of their staff to customers.

Until the end of June 2009, applications for multiple-employee membership into the CNP program will be available at a greatly discounted rate. Those nurseries with AGCAS accreditation are also eligible for one free membership for an eligible employee.

For further information on the Certified Nursery Professional program and application forms go to www.ngia.com.au/cnp or contact the NGIA office on (02) 9876 5200 or cnp@ngia.com.au



February edition of NGIA Clippings compiled and edited by Sarah McMahon, NGIA Publications & Web Coordinator.



This symbol tells you that the project, activity or event you're reading about is funded by your Nursery Industry Levy dollar.