

NGIA CLIPPINGS

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Jump to page

1 2 3 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1

- New Awards, Simplified Entry Process, Greater Winner Benefits

Page 2

- National Invasive Plants Survey – we need your assistance
- Victorian Tree & Shrub Growers visit the Top End

Page 3

- IPPS Conference in Tasmania a resounding success
- Obama good for the industry

Page 4

- Training? Forget it – no time, no money!
- New rules affect plant trade in SA

This month's Nursery Paper... Grow Me Instead – How the nursery industry is addressing the spread of invasive plants

As environmental awareness among the Australian community escalates, the need for Nursery & Garden Industry (NGIA) to promote its environmental credentials has never been more vital. In recent years, NGIA has taken significant steps to address key environmental issues. In this month's Nursery Paper, Robert Chin, National Development Officer – Invasive Plants and Delwyn Thomas, Grow Me Instead Project Manager, provide an overview of the national Grow Me Instead (GMI) program developed by NGIA in conjunction with the Australian Government to combat the spread of invasive plants.



New Awards, Simplified Entry Process, Greater Winner Benefits

Presented by Nursery & Garden Industry Australia, the Awards recognise and reward excellence within the nursery and garden industry and acknowledge industry leaders as they strive to achieve best business practice.

Each year the industry seeks feedback on the Awards process from entrants, as well as recommendations from judges to ensure the Awards are progressive and relevant to industry. For 2010 we have made some changes to the Awards and the entry process to make entering easier for you. Changes are:

- Simplified Submission Requirements- The entry criteria has been simplified, there is now an average of eight questions to be answered and the size of the submission varies depending on the category you are entering.
- New Categories- For 2010 we have introduced two new categories to the

production sector giving propagation nurseries and government owned and operated nurseries their own categories.

- Modifications to the Supplier Category- This Award is about industry recognition, this year we are asking garden centres and nurseries to nominate the supplier who has contributed the most to the development of their business and/or the nursery and garden industry as a whole.

There are many benefits to entering the 2010 Nursery & Garden Industry Awards. By participating in the Awards you will receive invaluable information from judges' feedback which will provide the opportunity to analyse where you are, where you want to go and what you need to do to get there as a business.

Participating in the Awards is a team effort for your business, getting your staff involved will reward you with improved staff morale and a more successful business.

2010 Nursery & Garden Industry Awards



Entries open June 1, 2009 and close July 26, 2009

There's everything to gain for you, your staff and your business so give it a go and enter the 2010 Nursery & Garden Industry Awards.

For more information or for an entry form go to the NGIA website www.ngia.com.au or contact Natalie Walker ph (02) 9876 5200, email Natalie.walker@ngia.com.au

National Invasive Plants Survey – we need your assistance

In recent years, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) has taken significant steps forward in tackling the spread of invasive plants. The launch of the Grow Me Instead state booklets in April was just one of the initiatives designed to educate industry and the wider community.

NGIA is now conducting a national invasive plants survey to address the gaps in knowledge and help us establish the level of awareness growers and retailers have regarding the plants they sell.

National Environmental and Technical Policy Manager Anthony Kachenko says: "For many years now, our industry has been proactive in responding to the threat of invasive plants to our natural environment. However, the question remains, how can we continue to place industry in the forefront when it comes to invasive plant issues?"

This survey will occur in two stages:

Stage one is currently underway. It will examine annual production lists nation-wide for recognised invasive plants.

As part of stage two, a survey will be conducted to collect data from production and retail nurseries nation-wide. This survey will gauge how familiar businesses are with invasive plants and determine if these are still offered for sale.

All information gathered during this project will be kept private and used only for research purposes. Business details will not be disclosed in the final report.

With an increasing focus on environmentally sound business practice, it is vital for industry to participate in this project.

Delwyn Thomas has been engaged to lead the project. Del is a well known and dedicated horticulturist with more than 40 years experience in the nursery and cut flower industries. Anthony Kachenko, NGIA National Environmental and Technical Policy Manager will be working with Del in coordinating the final evaluation and delivery of the project.

If you would like to know more about this project or to forward your list, contact Del Thomas Ph/Fax (02) 6557 2727 Mob: 0414 678840 or email: delwyn.thomas@ngia.com.au

Note: NGIA is aware that the lists of garden plants known to be invasive vary considerably from region to region. However, we will address this when evaluating production lists and make the final report. If you wish to make special note of certain species on your list, please do so.

Industry Training Package update

NGIA has been working with industry stakeholders for a number of years on the merger and review of the industry's Training Package AHC09. Unfortunately the current draft documents, released in April 2009, have not incorporated many of the areas of concern to our industry which have been previously brought to Agrifood Industry Skills Council's (AFISC's) attention.

We have been contacted by a large number of industry stakeholders from around Australia who do not support the current draft documents and as NGIA represent these industry stakeholders, we are therefore unable to support the package in its current

draft format and have advised AFISC of this.

NGIA has requested the AFISC formally reply to our concerns, addressing all the areas we have brought to their attention. Their response will be disseminated to industry stakeholders for further discussion. As the industry national body we will continue to work with all parties towards an acceptable outcome.

For further information on this project you can contact Fiona Kelly at the NGIA office on (02) 9876 5200 or fiona.kelly@ngia.com.au

Victorian Tree & Shrub Growers visit the Top End

Recently the Victorian Tree & Shrub Growers took a trip to the Northern Territory to look at some of the Top End's industry as well as to network, socialise and get away from the cold. Nursery & Garden Industry Victoria (NGIV) Industry Development Officer (IDO) Robert Chin Reports.

Our tour group was led by the current Chair, Steve Day, and organised in conjunction with Nursery & Garden Industry Northern Territory (NGINT) with the assistance of NGINT's Executive Officer Jane Dellow and President Tim West.

The trip consisted of three full days of industry visits and two days of touring. Nurseries visited included Allora Gardens, Ironstone Lagoon, Darwin's Greening Australia Nursery, Howard Springs, The Plantsmith Nursery and Darwin Plant Wholesalers. We also visited Finlay's Stonemasonry (landscape supplies) and were shown around a fantastic landscape surrounding near Darwin Airport which used indigenous plants. On the first evening we were joined by some NGINT members for a night of good food, good wine and good company.

We were lucky enough to make a visit to Litchfield National Park where we saw fascinating local plants, huge termite mounds and some beautiful waterfalls, and even had a swim at Florence Falls. Our group also took a tour of Lambells Lagoon and the famous Humpty Doo Hotel. On day four a fishing charter on the Arafura Sea was organised and enjoyed by all, and then a visit to the well-known Mindil Markets for one of the best sunsets in Australia. On the last day we saw some more fabulous green-life when we did tours of George Brown Botanic Gardens, Charles Darwin University and Hennessy's Flowers.

It was a very educational and enjoyable trip where new friendships and business relationships were made and renewed. The Victorian Tree & Shrub Growers would like to thank Jane Dellow and NGINT for their help and assistance.

Robert Chin
NGIV IDO



Arthur Thorpe and Peter Wilkins with Darryl South from Darwin Plant Wholesalers

Northern Territorians and the Victorian Tree & Shrub Growers enjoy an industry dinner



IPPS Conference in Tasmania a resounding success

National Environmental & Technical Manager Anthony Kachenko represented NGIA at the International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS) Conference in Tasmania. Here is his account:

Plant propagators converged on Hobart in May to attend the International Plant Propagators Society Conference – Fruitful at 42° South. Some 200 delegates from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa braved the Tasmanian chill to become better informed and up-to-date with current trends and research relevant to plant propagation and the nursery industry in general.

His Excellency the Honourable Peter Underwood, Governor of Tasmania accompanied with his wife, Mrs Frances Underwood, officially opened the conference at Government House in Grand Ballroom. Guests were treated to a medley of classical music whilst sipping on champagne and devouring assorted canapés as they networked with friends and colleagues.

The three day conference program was packed, with over 20 presentations covering everything from New Zealand Manuka honey as a rooting hormone for New Zealand natives, to breeding Correas. The winner of the Rod Tallis Award, Luke Dent, provided an overview of his trial work on propagating Grey Mangroves for rehabilitation work. Robert Chin (VIC IDO and Development Officer for Weeds) enlightened delegates with an overview of his Churchill Scholarship comparative study of invasive weed management in Australia, Canada and the USA. Michal Danelon (NSW IDO and

Development Officer for water) provided a detailed account on how to better manage irrigation in production nurseries.

Day two of the conference saw delegates split up into three groups for nursery visits. Groups converged on Westland Nurseries in the afternoon for lunch followed by a demonstration of potting, budding, grafting and knife sharpening. Unfortunately, the weather for visiting nurseries was far from ideal, with Mt Wellington, some 9 km west of Hobart, bearing a thick layer of snow! Did I mention the wind gusts up to 130 km/h? Despite these adverse conditions, the rain and chilling winds did not dampen the enthusiasm at all.

The informative sessions were capped off with an eclectic social program. A Saturday morning stroll through the Salamanca Markets which would later be followed by a sunset speed boat ride up the Derwent River - all the way to Storm Bay. The annual auction to raise funds for charity then saw a variety of donated items go under the hammer.

The conference was capped off with an informative free-for-all question and answer session which sparked some lively debate - a truly informative session. Fruitful at 42° South was a resounding success and testament to the hard work of those involved in organising this memorable event. Next year's conference will be held in Perth – an event that I certainly will not be missing.

Anthony Kachenko
National Environmental & Technical Policy
Manager, NGIA

Obama good for the industry

With the planting of Michelle Obama's veggie garden, the media has really picked up on the 'Grow Your Own' concept.

While the organic garden will provide food for the Obama family's meals and formal dinners, the First Lady says the most important role will be to educate children about healthy, locally grown fruit and vegetables at a time when obesity and diabetes have become a national concern.

"My hope," she says, "is that through children, they will begin to educate their families and that will, in turn, begin to educate our communities."

A journalist from Cosmopolitan, a magazine aimed at teenage girls and young women, even asked for comment from NGIA, her email request reading: "Michelle Obama is planting a garden at the White House to teach young people about healthy eating, so we want to

teach Cosmo girls how to plant a garden."

NGIA National Marketing & Communications Manager Jacqui Gibbs says there is continual, growing interest in 'Grow Your Own', with a particular focus on the environmental benefits. "Our 2009/10 PR campaign will centre around the GYO concept, highlighting the benefits of gardens and green-life to the media then onwards to the consumer, and ultimately driving people into their local garden centres."

The White House garden was also seen to represent more than just veggies and healthy eating, it has also a powerful political and environmental symbol, heartening the left-wingers who believe growing more food locally and organically, can reduce reliance on large industrial farms that use more oil for transportation and chemicals for fertiliser. However, it alarmed right-wingers, showing the most visible sign that the Obama Administration is 'green-tinged.'

President's Comment

The Nursery Industry like most industries is confronted with an ever evolving marketplace and the roll of the dice have certainly come up with the right numbers for us this last twelve months.

We have met the challenges and made the hard decisions but we must continue to be alert to the issues that confront us. The changes that have occurred within the national office will ensure we continue to deliver the strategic direction and leadership.

Training, Biosecurity and the support of industry programs will continue to be paramount for both our individual businesses and our industry.

Levy funds can not continue to flow into areas of low uptake or programs that don't deliver value for return on money. The purpose of the levy is to increase the sale of green-life. Every dollar has to be assessed against these criteria.

The industry needs assessment is underway. Robert Prince, NGIA CEO, will be visiting each state and, utilising the latest technology in survey methodology, will ensure the views of industry are obtained without being distorted.

The industry's new website and database is almost complete and will dramatically improve communication and keeping industry informed. Through this platform we will streamline state and national activities, eliminate costly duplication of effort and create a seamless delivery of service for all members.

The arrival of swine flu again highlights the issue of bio-security and quarantine. The Nursery industry is recognised as a leader in these areas within the horticulture sector. Our NIASA, EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP programmes for growers and Environmental Management for Retailers are your tools to ensure you are protecting your business in this area. Implementing EcoHort offers a targeted Environmental Management System (EMS) which allows gradual improvement without massive upfront expenditure.

Take the time to read our National Training Manager, Fiona Kelly's article on the value of training. We need to determine our training needs for now and the future to ensure we continue to develop our industry. Winter is the slowest time of the trading year for most of us so consider using this time to up-skill yourself and your team.

Geoff Richards, NGIA President

Upcoming events

June 9

NGINA Dubbo Trade Day

Dubbo, NSW

Ph: Robert Lee

(02) 6548 2572

Email: merriwa.nursery@hunterlink.net.au

June 17

NGIQ Brisbane Trade Day

Brisbane, QLD

Ph: Sarah Manser

(07) 3277 7900

Email: info@ngiq.ans.au

June 30

NGINA Wagga Wagga Trade Day

Wagga Wagga, NSW

Ph: Geoff Rapley

Email: info@ngina.com.au

www.ngina.com.au

July 4 - 7

Gift Fair Brisbane

Brisbane, QLD

Ph: Reed Exhibitions

(02) 9422 2777

Email: anne.atherton@reedexhibitions.com.au

www.giftfairs.com.au

July 7

NGIV Trade Day

Melbourne, VIC

Ph: NGIV

(03) 9576 0599

Email: ngiv@ngiv.com.au

July 7

NGINA Trade Day

Rouse Hill, NSW

Ph: Nadine Venter

(02) 9679 1472

Email: info@ngina.com.au

July 10

NGIQ Queensland Home Garden Expo

Queensland

Ph: Sarah Manser

Email: info@ngiq.asn.au

July 14

NGINA Dubbo Trade Day

Dubbo, NSW

Ph: Robert Lee

(02) 6548 2472

Email: merriwa.nursery@hunterlink.net.au

Training? Forget it - no time, no money!

Success in business means providing quality work and great customer service at a good price. It means keeping up with technology and staying ahead of the competition. To do that, you need skilled staff who are full of ideas, know the job and understand business priorities.

A skilled, trained workforce can dramatically improve bottom line performance, adding value to products and services and making it easier to compete within the market. Satisfied and motivated workers mean higher levels of staff retention, lowering the costs of recruitment.

Everyone needs to improve their skills - whether it's a young person just starting out or an old hand with many years' experience.

Research shows training plays a key role in increased job satisfaction. Two-thirds of

employees say they work harder as a result of learning new skills.

Talk to your Nursery & Garden Industry State Association. They have access to NGIA developed national workshops covering a multitude of topics, suitable for various levels of experience whether it be pest & disease; environmentally friendly practices; growing media or business planning. If the topics you are looking for are not advertised on the state training calendar - then ask for them! These workshops should be affordably priced, utilise the small group philosophy and be scheduled to allow for staff to attend without impacting too much on the day-to-day functions of your business.

If you need further information on NGI training contact your state association or the National Training & Recognition Manager at NGIA on (02) 9876 5200 or fiona.kelly@ngia.com.au

New rules affect plant trade in SA

In South Australia, the Fruit and Plant Protection Act 1992 will be replaced by the Plant Health Act 2009. Changes will come into force this July however, changes affecting nursery trade will not be enforced until January 1, 2010.

Nursery & Garden Industry Australia has been liaising with Primary Industries & Resources South Australia (PIRSA) to make these changes more reasonable in regard to the effect the regulatory controls will have on the horticulture industry.

The new act places a legal obligation on transporters to provide manifests to PIRSA, advising the impending arrival of fruit, vegetables or plant material into, within, or out of South Australia. It also prescribes significant penalties for not forwarding manifests when transporting, fruit, vegetables or plant material.

PIRSA will use the current system of ICA (Interstate Certification Agreement) forms to monitor stock coming into South Australia. It will also become stricter on the current system of IVCA (Import Verification Compliance Agreement) to 'match-up' paperwork with the ICA system.

The IVCA also shifts some degree of responsibility onto the importer who must take some action for stock that is imported i.e. recording of imports, plant health and subsequent treatment of stock.

However, it is important to note those businesses that belong to the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) or the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme (AGCAS) will have less work to do in order to abide by the new regulations.

If these accredited businesses follow some of the procedures outlined by the industry's BioSecure HACCP certification, they will be able to import stock without IVCA certification as long as they abide by certain specifications.

For more information on the Plant Health ACT 2009, contact PIRSA Plant Health Operations on 1300 666 010.

To find out about becoming accredited with AGCAS, NIASA or BioSecure HACCP contact your State Association or visit the NGIA website www.ngia.com.au



Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia

June edition of NGIA Clippings compiled and edited by Sarah McMahon, NGIA Communications & PR Coordinator.



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