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N&G NEWS

NURSERY & GARDEN INDUSTRY NSW & ACT

FREE Pet safe
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PLANNING FOR GROWTH IN A CHANGING INDUSTRY



Nursery & Garden Industry
NSW & ACT

We're Evolving

A NEW NAME FOR A STRONGER VOICE

Greenlife
INDUSTRY NSW & ACT



WHY THE CHANGE?

To align with Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) and ensure a consistent, national voice for our sector.

- Reduces confusion about who we represent
- Unifies all state associations under one clear banner
- Strengthens our position in the national supply chain



WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU:

- Greater visibility for your business as part of a trusted, future-focused network
- New opportunities via national partnerships, programs, and resources
- Stronger public engagement and industry advocacy
- Clearer representation for growers, retailers, allied traders, and maintenance professionals

This isn't just a name change It's the first step in a broader digital, communications, and awareness strategy that puts our members front and centre. This is your chance to vote on the change at the upcoming AGM on 19 November 2025.

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PUZZLES/FROM
PLANT TO PLATE**

Publisher: Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT

President: Andy Cameron

CEO: Mike Mehigan

Editor: Leisha Jordan

Guest Contributors: Mike Mehigan, Leisha Jordan, Tara Preston, Belinda McLean - HR Focus, Moshie, Syngenta Ornamentals, Ball Australia, Learning Sphere, Evergreen Connect, Garden City Plastics, Macey Trees, Mr Bamboo Wholesale, Franks Plantorium, Greenlife Industry Australia, Macquarie University.

Address: PO BOX 345, Kenthurst, NSW 2156

t: 02 9679 1472 | **e:** info@ngina.com.au

w: ngina.com.au

Design: Leisha Jordan

Printing: Fishprint, 447 Nepean Highway, Brighton East, VIC 3187. **t:** 03 9596 4807 | **w:** fishprint.com.au



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EXECUTIVE REPORT

After a cold and wet winter, the arrival of longer, warmer days have been a welcome change for garden centres and growers alike.

Upcoming Events to Mark in Your Diary

Our popular evening functions are set to return with daylight savings. A NextGen event is in the works at Welby Garden Centre, and details will be shared soon. These gatherings continue to be a great way to build connections across all corners of our industry.

Save the date, our Annual Awards Night will be held on 28 November at the Visy Dior Hotel in Norwest (formerly Ridges). It promises to be a night of recognition, connection and celebration.

The People's Choice Award is especially easy to promote through social media, so encourage your customers to get behind you and cast their vote.

We have added two exciting new award categories this year: Plant of the Year and Product of the Year. Both carry strong marketing value, so if you have something fresh and innovative launching soon, consider preparing and nominating for next year.

Recent Member Visits and Succession Planning Conversations

Andy Cameron and I recently travelled south, including visits to our members in Canberra. We were met with generous hospitality and inspiring conversations. Special thanks to Elizabeth Burnett and her team at Burnetts on Barney, who hosted a wonderful evening with pizza, wine and open exchange around the fire pit. The following night's dinner in Canberra was equally engaging and filled with valuable discussion.

Many members spoke about their desire to reduce or step back from day-to-day business involvement. This transition is becoming a common theme, and we will be introducing

tailored training and awareness programs to support this journey.

Green Expo Student Tour

Thanks to a generous grant from Local Land Services, NGINA was able to send five students to Queensland's Green Expo and on visits to several of our member businesses. Feedback from the tour has been overwhelmingly positive, with everyone enjoying a fantastic experience. A big thank you to GIQ for welcoming the students at the Expo, and to the businesses that hosted behind-the-scenes tours. Special thanks to Harts Nursery, Boyds Bay Nurseries, QIF, Alpine Alstonville and Eden at Byron for opening their doors.

Exploring AI and E-commerce

Artificial Intelligence and E-commerce continue to be major talking points at industry conferences, but many of us are still exploring how these tools apply to our day-to-day operations. In response, we will be offering member training in the coming months to build confidence and practical knowledge in these areas. If this is a space you feel unsure about, we encourage you to join these sessions.

Expressions of Interest - Melbourne Trials Week Tour

We are currently considering a member trip to Melbourne for Trials Week in December. The draft itinerary would see us leave Monday afternoon and return Wednesday evening. The visit would include new plant previews, Melbourne Trade Day, and hopefully some behind-the-scenes access to Victoria's leading businesses. If this sounds like something you would like to be a part of, please let us know. These trips are always a fantastic opportunity to connect, learn and be inspired.

Mike Mehigan
CEO





ASK AN

How do you Identify and Manage Resistance to Chemical Pesticides in Nurseries?

Pesticide resistance is a serious concern for nursery operations. Repeated use of the same active ingredient can lead to pest populations adapting, resulting in poor control, higher input costs, and greater biosecurity risks. Recognising the signs early and implementing integrated management strategies is key to protecting both plant health and business sustainability.

Understanding Resistance in Nursery Pests

Pesticide resistance occurs when a population of pests (such as whiteflies, thrips, aphids or mites) is repeatedly exposed to a chemical. Over time, the most tolerant individuals survive and pass on their traits, reducing the effectiveness of that product across future applications.

Early Warning Signs of Resistance

NIASA Best Management Practice Guidelines recommend ongoing pest monitoring and ask businesses to reflect on the following indicators of chemical resistance:

- Increased **survival rates** post-treatment
- A **decline in product efficacy** even when label rates and application methods are correct
- More **frequent applications** required to achieve the same level of control
- Poor control of **multiple life stages** (e.g. adults survive but juveniles don't)

Key Strategies for Resistance Management

NIASA-aligned nurseries are expected to adopt a strategic, preventative approach. Here's how:

1. Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

IPM is not optional, it is an industry expectation. A strong IPM program includes:

- Monitoring and identification of pests
- Threshold-based treatment decisions
- Record-keeping of pest pressure, treatments, and results
- Use of biological control agents (e.g. *Hypoaspis miles*, parasitic wasps)
- Environmental management to reduce pest habitats

NIASA-accredited sites must apply effective pest management with minimal chemical dependence.

2. Chemical Rotation by Mode of Action (MoA)

Products should be rotated based on chemical MoA groups, not just brand names. Overuse of a single MoA increases the risk of resistance. The Insecticide Resistance Action Committee (IRAC) groups are recommended for reference:

➡ <https://irac-online.org/modes-of-action>

Always observe label withholding periods and re-entry intervals.

3. Precision Application

Chemical control must be:

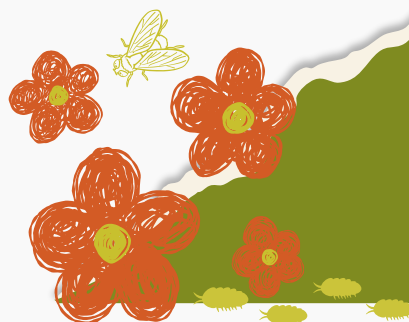
- **Applied to label specifications**
- **Calibrated regularly** (sprayer output, nozzle type)
- **Timed for pest vulnerability** (e.g., larval or nymph stages)
- **Well-penetrated** into dense foliage

Poor application technique can mimic resistance and increase selective pressure.

4. Environmental Hygiene

As outlined in Section 1.1 of the NIASA Guidelines, nursery hygiene supports pest control:

- Clean working surfaces, tools and containers
- Quarantine new plant material from non-NIASA suppliers
- Maintain weed-free production areas
- Remove and destroy unsaleable stock harbouring pests



EXPERT

5. Record Keeping & Review

Maintain records of:

- All chemical and biological applications
- Pest observations and monitoring data
- Any signs of resistance or treatment failure

These are required for NIASA audits and support long-term risk management.

Examples of Resistance-Prone Pests in Nurseries:

Western Flower Thrips:



Silverleaf Whitefly:



Two-spotted Mite:



Mealybugs:



These pests often develop resistance to multiple MoA groups and require diversified strategies.

Summary

Managing chemical resistance requires diligence, diversification, and a commitment to best practice. For NIASA-accredited businesses, this includes rotating chemical groups, applying integrated pest management strategies, maintaining strong hygiene and traceability systems, and continually training staff in resistance identification.

By proactively managing resistance, nurseries can safeguard crop quality, uphold accreditation standards, and ensure long-term profitability.

Resources:

- IRAC MoA Classification
- Nursery Production Farm Management System (NPFMS)



- Greenlife Industry Australia Technical Support: biosecure@greenlifeindustry.com.au



Back to Business Basics: PLANNING FOR GROWTH IN A CHANGING INDUSTRY

By Mike Mehigan | NGINA CEO

In today's competitive world, marked by shifting consumer behaviour, tighter margins and the rise of digital commerce, garden centres and production growers face increasing pressure to evolve. Beyond cultivating quality plants, thriving businesses need solid planning, strong financial awareness and a grasp of digital trends. This article outlines practical business fundamentals to help you improve performance and prepare for future growth.

Understanding Management Accounts

For any horticultural business, management accounts are more than numbers. They reveal how well your operation is functioning.

Key Concepts to Explore

- Profit and loss: Track sales, cost of goods and operational expenses.
- Balance sheet: Understand your assets such as land, equipment and inventory, and liabilities like loans or supplier credit.
- KPIs: Useful metrics may include shrinkage, stock turnover rate, gross margin per product line and labour cost percentages.

Don't rely solely on annual financial statements. Monthly reviews of your accounts can highlight trends before they become issues.

Making Sense of Cashflow Forecasts

Most nursery businesses experience seasonal spikes. Knowing when cash is coming in and going out is critical to smooth operations. You may need to consider how your business is financed.

What to Include

- Seasonality awareness: Plan around the natural peaks and troughs of your sales calendar.
- Payment cycles: Factor in terms from retailers or landscaping clients, and B2B orders.
- Scenario planning: Prepare for the unexpected, whether that's crop losses, transport disruptions or supply chain issues and delayed payment.





Real-world example: A grower might front heavy nursery production costs in autumn but only receive income after dispatching spring stock. Forecasting highlights any gaps.

Ecommerce and the Omnichannel Opportunity

For garden centres, ecommerce offers an extension of your shopfront. For growers, it can open direct-to-consumer opportunities or streamline B2B operations.

Essentials to Cover

- Basic platforms: User-friendly websites like Shopify, Squarespace or WooCommerce work well for plant retailers. EvergreenConnect have a new integrated platform entering the market.
- Logistics: Consider delivery partners, packaging and real-time stock updates, especially for live products.
- Integrated sales channels: Link social media, email marketing and digital catalogues to drive both online and in-store activity.

Quick win: Some garden centres are offering click-and-collect with live plant listings, meeting customer expectations while encouraging physical visits.

Adapting to the Changing Business Environment

The sector is evolving quickly. Shrinking garden sizes, sustainability demands and digital-first consumers are reshaping how businesses operate.

Themes to Emphasise

- Consumer shift: Buyers under 35s expect online access, eco-conscious choices and expert guidance.
- Tech integration: Tools like scheduling apps, AI, CRM systems or automation for irrigation and fertilising can enhance productivity.
- Strategic planning: Develop a simple annual business plan to clarify your direction and engage your team.

Final Thought

Whether you are selling punnets from a garden centre bench or propagating thousands of mature trees, business skills matter. Understand your financials, explore ecommerce and continue adapting to change.

There is no need to tackle everything alone. The industry provides a range of tailored training opportunities, from business resilience sessions, product costing, ecommerce awareness, how to use AI in your business. Attending these programmes is a practical way to stay informed, connected and competitive in today's market.

If you would like support with any of the topics covered, from cashflow forecasting to ecommerce basics, please feel free to reach out to Mike or Tara. We are here to help.

FROM UNDERDOG TO ADVANTAGE

THE POWER OF PEOPLE PLANNING IN SMALL BUSINESS

By Tara Preston, based on a presentation by Therese Ravell, Impact HR

When we think about what drives success in a nursery business, be it retail, wholesale, or production, we often focus on stock, customers, and sales. But as HR strategist, Therese Ravell reminded us in her standout presentation at the IGC Conference, none of that works without a solid people plan.

In fact, she challenged every attendee to stop and reflect:

"Do you have a people plan in place? Because without one, your sales, marketing, and financial plans will eventually grind to a halt."

Why Small is a Competitive Advantage

While larger businesses may have scale and resources, Therese argues that small businesses have something far more powerful - the ability to communicate quickly, build trust rapidly, and implement change almost immediately.

"You are not Bunnings. And that's a good thing," she said. "You have the power to create consistent, memorable experiences through effective team communication and leadership. That's your edge."

What Should a People Plan Include?

A strong people plan is more than just recruitment. It is a strategic framework that aligns your workforce with your business goals while protecting your operations and enhancing employee engagement.

Here are six essential elements to include:

Recruitment - Who you hire, how you attract them, cultural fit, and inclusive hiring practices

Remuneration - Fair wages, incentives, superannuation (retirement contributions), leave benefits

Training & Development - Ongoing learning, upskilling, and career growth opportunities

Performance Management - Setting clear expectations, giving feedback, resolving issues fairly

Communication - Clear instructions, regular check-ins, aligned team culture

Workplace Safety - WHS compliance, mental health support, risk management, updated policies

Tip: Include KPIs such as turnover rate, time-to-hire, or engagement scores to track your plan's effectiveness.



"Most small businesses skip this because they're too busy. But skipping it costs you time, money, and staff loyalty," Therese noted.

Download our People Planning Checklist here:



Feedback is a Gift (Even When It's Awkward)

One of the most memorable moments came through Therese's personal story: as a young exchange student in Japan, she confidently used a phrase in Japanese that she thought meant "May I sit here?" but actually meant something wildly inappropriate due to a minor mispronunciation.

The lesson? Without timely, honest feedback, small mistakes can turn into costly ones.

"We avoid giving feedback because it feels uncomfortable," Therese said. "But feedback is a gift. We give gifts to people we care about."

She recommends:

- Give feedback in private
- Lead with observations, not accusations
- Frame feedback with solutions and collaboration in mind

The Power of Clear Instructions

In a powerful demonstration, Therese asked attendees to "draw a dog." Unsurprisingly, every drawing was different. When she added step-by-step instructions and visual cues, the results became consistent and accurate.

"When we say, 'go sell that plant,' we are giving them as much context as 'draw a dog,'" she said. "Instead, train them with scripts. Observe your top performer and turn their approach into a system."

This is how McDonald's does it and it works.

Sales Through Service – Retail Relevance

Therese encouraged nurseries to teach staff suggestive selling techniques that are helpful, not pushy:

- "Would you like some potting mix with that?"

- "These plants pair really well, would you like me to grab one?"

Scripts and prompts aligned with customer needs like seasonal tips, potting accessories, or mulch bundles can turn one-time buyers into loyal, returning customers.

Three Final Reminders

Therese closed with three takeaways for every small business leader:

1. **Feedback is a gift** – Plan it, wrap it well, and give it often.
2. **Clarity beats correction** – Guide up front to reduce the need to fix later.
3. **Predictable patterns lead to performance** – Use systems, scripts, and consistency to drive service excellence.

Whether you lead a team of three or thirty, remember: success isn't about size it's about structure, support, and communication. A great people plan isn't just nice to have it's your secret weapon.

Ready to get started? Create a people planning checklist or connect with an HR advisor to start building your plan today.



Written by Tara Preston, Insights from Brian Walker, The Retail Doctor, at the IGC Conference

HOW GARDEN CENTRES CAN DRIVE GROWTH AND RELEVANCE IN A CHANGING MARKET

Boring retail is dead!

Retail isn't dead but boring retail definitely is. That was the bold message from retail strategist Brian Walker, aka The Retail Doctor, at this year's Independent Garden Centre (IGC) Conference. His message? The landscape has changed, customers are evolving, and sticking to the status quo is a recipe for irrelevance.

"People spend money where they feel good and trust the brand," said Brian. "Retail is not just a transaction anymore - it's emotional, experiential, and personal."

For garden centres to grow in this environment, they must evolve. Here are 10 strategic takeaways, plus action steps and KPIs, to build a thriving retail business.

1. Customer Data Is Your New Infrastructure

The most valuable companies today don't just sell products, they use data. Garden centres must follow suit.

Key Quote: "Data is the new capital. If you are not collecting it, you are already behind."

Action Steps:

- Build a customer database now (including first name, email, mobile number, birthday month and day, postcode, loyalty program membership number)
- Segment your top 50-100 customers by behaviour (e.g. product category preferences, purchase frequency, engagement level)
- Use birthdays, purchases, and preferences to personalise outreach.

Metrics to Track:

- Customer lifetime value (LTV)
- Email open/click rates by segment
- Repeat purchase rate

2. Omnichannel = Basic Hygiene

Customers shop for convenience, not channels. If your store closes at 5pm, your brand better be working 24/7 online.

Action Steps:

- Treat website, email, and social media as your digital storefront.
- Offer ecommerce, postage/delivery/click-and-collect, virtual consultations, and online chat.
- Sync inventory across platforms.

Metrics to Track:

- Online/offline conversion rates
- Cart abandonment rate
- Response time on digital platforms

Tip: If you're looking to automate these flows or run chat-based customer service, ManyChat is a powerful automation tool for Messenger, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

3. Make the Visit Worth It

In-person shopping still matters but only when it delivers something memorable.

Action Steps:

- Host workshops, expert talks, and tastings.
- Invest in visual merchandising and multi-sensory displays.
- Train staff to be guides, not order-takers.

Metrics to Track:

- Foot traffic vs. conversion rate
- NPS (Net Promoter Score).
- Average basket size

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a simple but powerful tool used to measure customer satisfaction and loyalty. It asks one key question: "On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend our business to a friend or colleague?"

4. Loyalty = Belonging

Loyalty today is not earned with plastic cards or points, it's built through recognition, relevance, and real connection. Customers come back when they feel seen, valued, and part of something.

Action Steps:

- Build personal relationships with top spenders.
- Host VIP events or behind-the-scenes tours.
- Use CRM to automate but personalise communication.

Metrics to Track:

- Loyalty program participation rate
- Retention rate of top 10% customers
- Referrals from loyal customers

5. Experience > Product

You need the right products, sure. But experience is what drives trust and conversion.

Action Steps:

- Empower staff to solve problems.
- Use storytelling in signage and displays.
- Sell transformation (beauty, health, home), not just items.

Metrics to Track:

- Upsell and cross-sell success rate
- Customer dwell time
- Product return rate

6. Build an Uncopyable Brand

Your real advantage isn't price or product it's your story, personality, and values. Big box stores can match your range, but they can't replicate the authentic brand experience you create.



Action Steps:

- Document your brand values and tone.
- Make branding consistent across touchpoints.
- Stand for something meaningful (e.g. sustainability, local sourcing).

Metrics to Track:

- Brand recall in customer surveys
- Engagement rate on brand storytelling posts
- Social shares of brand content

7. Fix the Service Gap

Brian Walker's team ran 20 mystery shops at Retail Garden Centres across Australia. The results? The average customer connection score was just 42.2% - well below the 90% benchmark.

Key Performance Gaps:

- 90% of team members did not attempt to cross-sell
- 85% did not attempt to upsell
- 70% did not mention loyalty programs or collect customer data
- 65% did not try to close the sale
- 60% did not build rapport with customers
- 55% did not ask open-ended questions
- 60% failed to assist customers within 30 seconds
- 45% stayed behind the counter rather than approaching to help

What Centres Did Well:

- 100% of staff were well-presented
- 100% of products were well-stocked and clearly priced
- 95% of shopfronts were tidy and accessible
- 90% of team members gave a warm farewell

These results show the visual and environmental basics are strong but sales and service behaviours are lagging behind.

"Customer connection drives 20% more in sales and profit," Walker reminded attendees. "Yet most centres are missing the moment."

Action Steps:

- Train staff weekly with scripts and roleplay.
- Set customer service KPIs (e.g., greet within 30 seconds).
- Conduct mystery shops quarterly.

Metrics to Track:

- Staff service scores
- Percentage of transactions with customer data collected
- Sales per employee

8. Win Millennials & Gen Z

Younger consumers are leading the charge and they think differently.

Action Steps:

- Emphasise sustainability, inclusivity, and transparency.
- Be mobile-first: responsive site, SMS updates, Insta-ready visuals.
- Use educational videos, how-to guides, and community content.

Metrics to Track:

- % of customers under 40
- Video engagement rates
- Mobile vs. desktop conversions

9. Complacency > Competition

Your greatest threat isn't big box retailers it's standing still. In today's fast-changing retail landscape, inaction is more dangerous than competition.

Action Steps:

- Build a 12-month strategy with KPIs.
- Review performance monthly.
- Test one new initiative per quarter.

Metrics to Track:

- Strategy completion rate
- Innovation ROI (new offers vs. revenue impact)
- Staff idea submissions

10. Value = Profit + Potential

Whether you want to sell, expand or exit you are valued by what your business can do next, not what it did last spring.

Action Steps:

- Invest in CRM, POS, and operations systems.
- Build a team that can run the shop without you.
- Document SOPs and succession plans.

Metrics to Track:

- Profit margin trends
- Tech adoption scores
- Founder dependency index

If your garden centre is not evolving, it is eroding. You do not need to be the biggest or cheapest. But you do need to be the most trusted, emotionally connected, and worth visiting.

"Be the expert. Build the tribe. Win the customer." Brian Walker



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We guarantee we can find \$35k of savings in your Greenlife business*

Bruce Yelland

bruce@moshie.biz

0412 241 801

Josh Kyne

josh@moshie.biz

0451 283 715

With close to 500 clients, we work Australia wide

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Bruce Yelland

bruce@moshie.biz

0412 241 801

Josh Kyne

josh@moshie.biz

0451 283 715

Parting Words:

Be found or be forgotten

By Leisha Jordan, Marketing & Communications Manager, NGINA

After three and a half years of facilitating the marketing and communications function for the NGINA and it's members, it's time for me to hang up my, well... laptop.

From launching our new website and evolving our digital resources and communications, to reshaping our brand and online presence, hosting masterclasses, creating/editing this magazine and offering countless hours of advice - one thing has always remained at the heart of my work: helping you be found online.

Updating NGINA's own digital presence was one thing. Convincing our members to adapt to a digital world? That's been a whole other challenge mostly because I know you're already stretched thin. It's hard to justify one more task when you're juggling plants, people, and pests (sometimes all at once).

But here's the truth: no matter how beautiful your stock is, how loyal your customers are, or how long your business has stood strong,

"If people can't find you, they can't buy from you. And in today's world, being online is non negotiable for long term business survival."



The Digital Basics That Matter Most

Google My Business

If you only do one thing, do this. A *free* listing that puts your business on the map, literally. It helps you show up in local search results when someone types "nursery near me" into Google.

[N&G News Summer 2023, pg 24-25]

A Website That Works

Doesn't have to be flashy, but it does need to be mobile-friendly, easy to navigate, and include your opening hours, contact info, and what you sell. It's your 24/7 shopfront.

[N&G News Autumn 2025, pg 16-17]

Social Media

I've written a hundred ways to help you show up online. You don't need to post daily. You just need something for people to find when they look you up. Even trade buyers are checking Instagram these days.

[How often should I post blog]

[1 month of content ideas]

[N&G News Winter 2023, pg 20]

[N&G News Spring 2023, pg 25]

[All about hashtags blog]

[Crafting an Insta Bio blog]

[User Generated Content blog]



Find all these resources
in the member centre

Email Still Converts

Still one of the best ways to speak directly to your audience, whether it's a seasonal stock list, a how-to guide, or an invite to Trade Day.

[N&G News Spring 2024, pg 24-25]

[Email marketing strategies for greenlife]

[Creating stock list emails blog]

Paid Ads (When You're Ready)

Google and Meta ads can be a great growth tool, but only once your foundations are set. Like fertiliser, they work best when the soil is already strong.

[N&G News Winter 2025, pg 14-15]

And if you're looking for next steps, a few of my past articles are still available to help:

Blogging

For those ready to boost their SEO and share their expertise online.

[N&G News Autumn 2024, pg 17]

[Benefits of blogging blog]

Creating a Marketing Strategy

A simple guide to help plan your promotions, socials, and customer engagement for the year ahead.

[N&G News Summer 2024, pg 29 - 32]

You Already Have What It Takes

What I've learned working in this industry is that the knowledge, heart, and resilience you all bring is unmatched. And if this industry can convert me... someone who started with a black thumb into a garden lover, it can convert anyone.

I leave this role with more than skills. I leave with a gift: a genuine love of plants, gardening, and the people behind it all.



Find all these resources in the member centre

It's been an absolute pleasure helping to modernise and elevate NGINA and it's members.

My Final Encouragement

You don't need a marketing degree. You don't need to be glued to your phone. You just need to take the first step and keep showing up.

So here's what I want to leave you with:

"Be findable. Be helpful. Be YOU online. Because this industry has something that people need."

Now let's make sure they can find it!

With heartfelt thanks,

Leisha

If we haven't connected yet, you can find me on LinkedIn. I'm always happy to answer questions or bounce around ideas even after I've left. My inbox is open, and I'd love to stay in touch with this incredible community.



GET \$150
OFF YOUR NGINA
MEMBERSHIP FEES!

Simply refer a potential member. Once they have successfully signed up you will receive \$150 off your NGINA annual membership fees! The more members you bring on board, the more you earn/save!



Awards & Gala Dinner

You're invited to join us on

Friday 28 November

Canapés & Drinks: 6:00pm

Dinner & Awards Presentation: 6:30pm

Guest MC:

Simon Holloway

Dress Code: Cocktail

Cost: \$195 Per Head

Location: Rydges Norwest



RSVP: By Friday 7 November



WHY
COMPETING
ON PRICE IS
HURTING
YOUR
BUSINESS

By Tara Preston

THE DISCOUNT SPIRAL

In today's hyper-competitive horticulture market it can feel logical to cut prices to win contracts or move volume in store. But many small to medium enterprises (SMEs) are learning the hard way: competing on cost alone drives your business into the discount spiral, a race to the bottom that erodes margins, weakens resilience, and stunts long-term growth.

Research shows that excessive discounting is one of the leading causes of profit loss across the Australian nursery and garden sectors. The businesses that thrive are not the ones offering the lowest prices they are the ones building the most value.

Sector	Key Points	Insights & Implications
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Price-based competition reduces gross margins by up to 30% in single-location nurseries (Hodges et al., 2008).• Only 18.9% of customers cite price as their main reason for choosing a garden centre – quality, expertise, and experience rate higher (Behe et al., 2008).• Discounting attracts low-loyalty buyers, 3x more likely to switch for a cheaper price (Singh et al., 2017).	Competing with big box retailers on price is like bringing secateurs to a chainsaw fight. Large-scale operators have lower costs and supplier leverage. Discounting often sacrifices service, quality, sustainability, and staff morale.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heavily discount-reliant horticultural businesses report profit margins below 5%, compared to the industry average of 10–12% (Kneen, 2011; Hall & Hodges, 2010).• Low-priced contracts are the first cut when retailers consolidate or source elsewhere (Hodges et al., 2010).• Mass-market price models cause overproduction, wastage, and 18–25% annual plant loss in large nurseries from unsold stock (Brumfield, 2010).	You can't out-discount larger competitors who propagate, grow, and distribute internally. Compete on what they can't replicate: specialisation, relationships, flexibility, and expertise.
Allied	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Price-only selling leads to commoditisation – customers see little difference and switch over minor cost changes (Brumfield, 2010).• Suppliers bundling technical support, training, or logistics see up to 28% more repeat business (Brumfield, 2010).• Generic offerings are being displaced by specialised or integrated solutions for nursery and landscape sectors (Campbell & Hall, 2010).• Relationships and responsiveness are top loyalty drivers among nurseries and independent garden centres (Hall et al., 2005).	Price-only selling erodes differentiation. Offering value added services and building strong relationships increases customer retention and resilience.

WHY COMPETING ON PRICE ALONE BACKFIRES

You are not just selling plants or products you are delivering reliability, expertise, and relationships.

Consequence	Impact
Lower margins	Reduces your ability to reinvest in training, plant health, logistics, irrigation, pest management systems, skilled labour or innovation.
Customer churn	Discount-driven buyers have low loyalty and high acquisition costs.
Perceived devaluation	Constant sales, discounts, or low pricing make customers question your products' real value.
Quality erosion	Pressure to cut costs can compromise plant health, input quality, and biosecurity, as well as sustainability and service reliability.

As Hall et al. (2005) stress, businesses that rely on price as their main differentiation tool are more vulnerable to market shocks and economic downturns. They also found that price-focused nursery businesses were 2.3x more likely to report unstable buyer relationships over a 5-year period.

The Syngenta logo, featuring the word "syngenta" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a small leaf icon above the 'y'.

Help your plants
go the distance
with HICURE®.

Professional plant
biostimulant backed
by science.

The Hicure Biostimulant logo, featuring a stylized sunburst icon to the left of the word "Hicure" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "Biostimulant" in a smaller font below it.

Scan the QR code for
more information

Syngenta Australia Pty Ltd, Level 1, 2 Lyonpark Road, Macquarie Park NSW 2113.
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COMPETE ON VALUE, NOT PRICE

What can't large retailer and suppliers replicate? Your flexibility, reliability, and expertise.

Sector	Competitive Edge & Approach	Supporting Data
Retail Nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience: Create immersive store environments, engaging staff interactions, and seasonal inspiration. • Expertise: Offer growing tips, pest advice, and plant care guidance - larger retailers can't replicate this. • Sustainability: Promote local sourcing, compostable packaging, and waterwise plants to attract eco-conscious shoppers. • Community Engagement: Host workshops, garden clubs, or native planting days to build loyalty and increase foot traffic. 	<p>"Retail nurseries offering workshops and expert advice see 43% higher customer retention over two years." (Behe et al., 2008)</p>
Production Nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency & Reliability: Deliver on-time, uniform crops across multiple orders - essential for landscapers and councils. • Plant Health & Biosecurity: Certify stock, trace propagation origins, and use integrated pest management. • Niche Development: Offer cultivars or lines for climate adaptation, pollinator support, or indigenous planting. • Flexible Supply Contracts: Work with clients to forecast and secure stock rather than relying on spot pricing. 	<p>"Nurseries that offered custom-growing contracts and quality certifications retained 34% more wholesale customers over a 3-year period." (Campbell & Hall, 2010)</p>
Allied Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Training: Equip customers with knowledge to sell better and reduce returns. • Tailored Packaging & Delivery: Adapt to specific nursery needs (timing, branding, order size). • Co-marketing: Partner on promotions or point-of-sale assets for shared visibility. • Customisation: Provide specialised or integrated solutions rather than generic offerings. 	<p>"Allied suppliers who offered ongoing training and customisation increased repeat sales by 28%." (Brumfield, 2010)</p>

THE BOTTOM LINE

Whether you grow, retail, or supply your edge is not price. It is trust, expertise, consistency, and service. Chains may beat you on cost. But they cannot match your relationship equity. "Only 19.8% of consumers consider price a major factor when buying plants - 39% say plant health and 29% cite staff knowledge." (Behe et al., 2008)

Don't fall into the discount spiral. Build value and your customers will reward you for it.

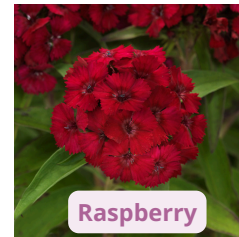


White

DIANTHUS DART

A Ball exclusive

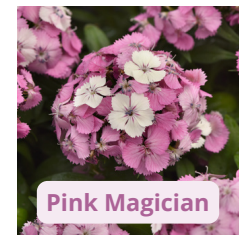
Article written by Steven Engel,
Regional Account Manager -
PanAmerican Seed



Raspberry



Red White Picotee



Pink Magician



Scarlet

While producing colourful plants for early spring, your greenhouse is bound to run into additional costs from heating and energy to lighting and labour. You might be wondering if there's a better way to meet the needs of early retail sales without breaking the bank.

Get ready to hit the mark with an innovation from PanAmerican Seed. The new Dart Dianthus series requires no heat for spring production while still boasting flowers one to two weeks earlier than the competition. In addition, Dart has a naturally compact habit, so more plants can be grown per square metre.

In terms of appeal, the Dart series shows plenty of colour at retail and has the potential for more seasonal blooming. It launches with six options: White, Red White Picotee, Purple, Pink Magician, Scarlet and Raspberry. They fit nicely into retail programs due to their versatility in all pot sizes, plus a uniform flowering window (Scarlet is one week later to flower).

Here are a few production guidelines to help you produce Dianthus Dart for early spring sales:

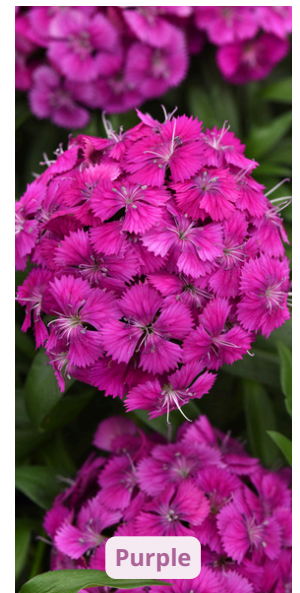
Finishing key tips: Dart is lightly sensitive to daylength, though it's classified as facultative long day. Temperature and light intensity have higher impacts on flower timing/crop time than daylength.

Temperatures for finishing: Day: 18 to 24C Night: 6 to 16C

The target media pH should be 5.8 to 6.2 with an EC of 1.5 to 2.0 mmhos/cm. Starting a week after transplant, apply fertiliser at a rate of 175 to 225 ppm N once a week, from nitrate-based fertilizer with low phosphorus.

Dart is a naturally compact series. It responds well to paclobutrazol (Bonzi) when necessary. Dart will benefit from being grown under high light levels for promoting plant branching and flower colour and quality.

Plants grow bigger and fill pots easier under higher DLI. Providing high light will also keep plants compact and will reduce the need for PGRs. Plants will develop faster and will be earlier to flower when temperatures increase.



Purple



White

Total crop time will be around two weeks faster when average day temperatures (ADT) change from 16C to 20C. Dart can be grown cool in outdoor containers, field or in cool tunnels after transplant at 5C night temperatures.

Autumn finishing is possible as well. Plants will finish faster because of higher average day temperatures. For northern areas with mild winters, winter and early spring production can be done. Lower average day temperatures increase flower shelf life. Pinching is not required or needed.

The excitement is high for gardeners that enjoy early season living colour and it continues through to early summer.

Check out our full range of Dianthus Dart in our plant list section on our website and select 'Dianthus Dart' @ ballaustralia.com OR contact us for sales enquiries: Phone (03) 9798 5355 / Email orders to: orders@ballaustralia.com

WHY EVERY BUSINESS NEEDS A PLAN



By Tara Preston

1. It Transforms Vision into

Strategy: A business plan clarifies what you do, who you serve, and where you are going. It turns big ideas into actionable steps to ensure you are working purposefully, not just tirelessly.

"Failing to plan is planning to fail"
Benjamin Franklin.

A timeless principle echoed in every successful business playbook.

2. It Guides Smart, Strategic

Decisions: From staffing to product launches to investments,

a well-crafted plan helps ensure every decision supports long-term growth. It becomes the framework for evaluating opportunities not just reacting to them.

3. It Keeps Your Finances in

Focus: The Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA) reported that 43 % of small businesses in Australia are not making a profit. A lack of strategic planning is one of the leading causes. A strong business plan helps you forecast sales, manage costs, optimise profit

margins and project cash flow. This keeps your financial decisions grounded in data, not guesswork.

4. It Creates Built-In

Accountability: With milestones, timelines, and KPIs, your plan becomes your accountability partner. This enables regular check-ins, course corrections, and momentum over time.

"What gets measured gets managed."
Peter Drucker.

Including KPIs in your plan ensures that growth is intentional and performance is measurable.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

Business Overview: A snapshot of who you are, what you do, and the mission and values that drive you forward.

Market Analysis: Define your ideal customer. Understand your competition. Identify trends and opportunities using real-world data, not gut instinct.

Products & Services: Detail your offerings and how they solve specific customer problems. Highlight what makes your solution stand out.

Operations Plan: Outline day-to-day logistics, staffing, workflows, systems, and infrastructure. This is the engine room of your business.

Financial Plan: Include revenue forecasts, break-even analysis, expense estimates, cash flow projections, and capital needs. Numbers drive decisions.

Marketing & Sales Strategy: How will you attract, convert, and retain customers? Include your branding, pricing strategy, promotion channels, and customer journey.

Goals & KPIs: Lay out measurable objectives for the next 12 months and beyond. Tie them to specific actions and indicators of success.

MODERN BUSINESS PHILOSOPHIES THAT REINFORCE PLANNING

- **Lean Startup Mindset:** Great plans start small and adapt fast. Build, test, and revise based on real-world feedback.
- **Design Thinking:** Empathy, creativity, and iteration belong in planning. Centre your customer in every aspect of your blueprint.
- **Agility Through Structure:** Even agile companies need a strategic foundation. Your plan is the baseline for pivoting, not a constraint.

A business plan is not a one-time document, it is a living, breathing roadmap. Review it regularly: after a major shift, during a seasonal surge, or when a new opportunity arises.

The bottom line? Businesses that plan outperform those that do not - in revenue, resilience, and results. Start yours today. Future You will thank you.

DOWNLOAD OUR NGINA BUSINESS PLAN TEMPLATE:



THE ESSENTIAL ONBOARDING CHECKLIST EVERY BUSINESS SHOULD HAVE...

A successful onboarding process is essential for integrating new employees into an organisation and setting the stage for their long-term success.

Australian companies must ensure they cover all necessary aspects of onboarding to adhere to local regulations and create a welcoming environment for new hires. In this article, HR Focus will discuss the key items Australian companies should cover when onboarding a new employee.

Employment Paperwork and Legal Requirements:

To comply with Australian laws, new employees must complete a range of essential paperwork, including:

- Tax File Number Declaration Form
- Superannuation Choice Form
- Fair Work Information Statement
- Employment Contract
- Confidentiality Agreement

Company Overview and Policies: Introduce new employees to the company's mission, vision, and values. Provide them with access to important company policies, including:

- Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- Anti-discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Leave Policies.

Discuss the company's expectations regarding employee behaviour, communication, and performance to ensure a clear understanding of their role within the organisation.

Role-specific Training: Develop a comprehensive training plan for new employees that covers their specific job responsibilities and tasks. This may include:

- Introduction to company software and tools
- Technical skills training
- Sales or customer service techniques
- Product or service knowledge
- Company processes and procedures
- Assign a mentor or buddy to help guide new employees through the initial stages of their role and answer any questions they may have.



Health and Safety Orientation: Australian companies must ensure their new employees receive proper health and safety orientation, including:

- Emergency procedures and evacuation plans
- First aid facilities and trained personnel
- Location of safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers
- Reporting hazards and incidents
- Personal protective equipment requirements, if applicable.

Team Introductions and Integration: To help new employees feel welcome and part of the team, make sure they are introduced to their colleagues, supervisors, and other key personnel. Arrange a team lunch or social event to facilitate relationship-building and foster a sense of belonging.

Company Culture and Social Norms: Introduce new employees to the company's culture and social norms. This may include:

- Dress code and appearance guidelines
- Office etiquette and communication style
- Workspace organisation and cleanliness
- Company social events and activities
- Employee support programs and resources

Performance Expectations and Goals: Discuss the employee's performance expectations and short-term and long-term goals. Establish a clear understanding of their key performance indicators (KPIs) and outline the process for performance evaluations and feedback.

By covering these essential items during the onboarding process, Australian companies can help new employees feel supported, well-informed, and ready to contribute to the organization's success. Investing in a comprehensive onboarding process not only improves employee satisfaction and retention but also lays the foundation for a strong and productive workforce.

H · R · FOCUS

NGINA members get free access to expert HR advice through the HR Focus Workplace Advice Line. Call the office at 02 9679 1472 or info@ngina.com.au for the monthly code, then call Belinda on 0438 464 787 with the code.

UNLOCK YOUR NGINA ADVANTAGE!

Your One-time Login Unlocks a World of Tools, Discounts, Training & Support


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- ✓ Expert business tools, HR documents & workplace safety guides
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- ✓ Critical industry updates & biosecurity alerts
- ✓ Free job ads, marketing tips, podcasts & member blogs
- ✓ Registration for member only events & trainings
- ✓ Update your business or personal details anytime

» VISIT THE MEMBER CENTRE NOW »

If you don't have your Member Centre password, please contact our office by phone or email and we'll assist you with a password reset.



The NGINA Member Centre is your digital home base, a central hub where members can access practical resources, stay informed, connect with others, and grow their business with confidence. Whether you're after workplace tools, HR advice, biosecurity updates, marketing assets, or event registrations, it's all here and ready when you are.



Business Hub

This section is packed with practical support, Tools to Run and Grow Your Business and exclusive benefits

- **Business Tools:** Work Health & Safety, Human Resources, Sales and Customer Service, Processes & Procedures and Technology resources
- **Commercial Discounts:** Save money with partner deals.
- **Awards & Payrates:** Keep up to date with wages, superannuation requirements, and award pay guides.
- **HR Services:** Access templates, checklists, audit tools, and get advice via the HR Advice Line.

Don't forget to update your personal and business details in the Member Centre, including your email and communication preferences. This ensures you stay up to date with our news and events, and keeps your public listing on the "Find a Member" page accurate.



Industry Info Hub

Be the first to know about threats, stats, and research shaping our industry

- **Biosecurity:** Regular updates on fire ants, cane toads, and other threats.
- **Disaster Assistance:** Tools and links to help you prepare for and recover from disasters.
- **Industry & Hort Innovation Statistics:** Real data to help you plan, measure, and grow.
- **Nursery Papers:** Access monthly research papers and updates funded by your levy.
- **Trading Terms & Barcoding Guide:** Essential documents to keep you compliant and competitive.



NGINA Comms Hub

Resources to Promote, Connect & Share
This is your go-to for industry news, marketing tools, and member networking

- **N&G News Magazine:** Our quarterly magazine packed with insights, stories, and advice.
- **eNews:** Stay updated with our fortnightly digital newsletter.
- **Podcast:** Tune in to hear the latest while you're on the go.
- **Member Forum:** Listen to past forums featuring our CEO and President.
- **Marketing Resources:** Social media guides, blog content, logos and more to grow your business online.
- **Job Ads:** Post positions for free, we'll help spread the word through our channels.
- **Member Blog:** Members-only content designed to support your business growth.



Events & Training Hub

Stay Connected & Skilled
Tap into a wide range of events and learning opportunities throughout the year

Become a member



Nursery & Garden Industry
NSW & ACT

The Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT (NGINA) is an industry-led, membership-based, not-for-profit organisation that is the peak industry body for operators in the nursery and garden sector in NSW and ACT. This can include:

- Growers and producers of plants
- Wholesalers and hirers of plants
- Retailers of plants and related products
- Industry gardens, florists and landscapers
- Allied traders—suppliers of growing media, chemicals, containers, tools and equipment, etc.
- Service providers including consultants, training providers, government departments, etc.

Members of NGINA range from small to medium-sized family-based operations through to multinational corporations and all share a passion for greenlife and for the industry.

Such a diverse membership brings with it many different needs and requirements and that's why we have created a range of membership categories.

NEW

MEMBER INCENTIVES

**\$150 COULD
BE YOURS!**

Earn \$150 off your membership, simply refer a potential member. Once they have successfully signed up you will receive \$150 off! The more members you bring on board, the more you earn!



Students

\$50 yearly

Subscription to N&G News, eNews, access to Sydney and regional trade days. Invitations to attend our four NextGen events held throughout the year



Single Business Owner

**\$55 monthly
\$645 yearly**

A business entity (owner/operator) that conducts its operations with no additional employees and/or contractors engaged in the delivery or production of its products or services



Trading

**\$135 monthly
\$1,520 yearly**

Available for businesses with 5 or less full-time equivalent (FTE*) employees including owner/principal



Enterprise

**\$220 monthly
\$2,536 yearly**

Available for businesses with 6–20 full-time equivalent (FTE*) employees including owner/principal



Corporate

**\$400 monthly
\$4,554 yearly**

Available for businesses with more than 20 full-time equivalent (FTE*) employees including owner/principal

Membership periods follow the calendar year, with pro rata rates applied for new members joining partway through. Members can choose to pay a one-off annual subscription or opt for 12 monthly instalments, which include a 5% surcharge (already reflected in the displayed rate).

Complete our NGINA membership application form online by scanning this QR code. Approved applicants will be notified by email or contacted by phone. If you have any questions about membership, please contact the NGINA office on 02 9679 1472.



NGINA MEMBER BENEFITS



Growth

We know that you, like all our members, strive to grow both your business and our industry. To help you flourish, membership of NGINA provides you with access to a suite of key business tools and services.

- NGINA Advice line. If we can't help you, we will find someone who can.
- Personal HR advice from the specialists at Business Australia
- Access to 'members only' area on NGINA's website
- Resources to help run your business inc 250+ Industry specific discounted HR & WH&S templates & documents
- NGINA Member support calls & visits



Connectivity

Knowing what's both going on and growing on is paramount in our industry. NGINA strives to make this an easy task for you by providing a range of tools, platforms and forums designed to ensure you are up to date and informed.

- Networking events
- Special Interest Groups
- Jobs Board for posting positions vacant
- Comms: fortnightly eNews, quarterly N&G News Magazine, Texts, Monthly Member Forums, Podcasts, Social Media, Biosecurity Legislation and grant updates
- Free attendance & opportunity to be a stall holder (fees apply) at our NSW Trade Days (Sydney, Port Macquarie, Northern Rivers) as well as NGIQ Trade Day



Knowledge

Each year NGINA conducts a wide range of industry-driven events, workshops and training courses to help you build your business, and grow and develop not only your knowledge and professional skills but also those of your staff.

- Be kept informed of new opportunities for your business
- Keep your finger on the pulse of industry trends
- We can help promote large upcoming news and events on your behalf
- Industry workshops and training courses including first aid, chemcert, marketing & business training



Savings

NGINA can save you both time and money—from helping to untie legal knots to providing industry-specific technical advice, offering subsidised training and accreditation programs to cost-saving initiatives with industry partners—to name just a few!

- Commercial member discounts with our commercial partners: Dell Aust, Choice Energy & Ledermans Insurance Brokers
- Free hire of NGINA's large meeting room and assisted catering
- Inclusion on the Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) trade register
- Discounted advertising in N&G News Magazine



Recognition

Being a member of an Industry Association shows a level of excellence and high standards of your business and products.

- Professional recognition at Industry awards night
- New member feature in our publications
- Alliance with us giving customers confidence in the high standards of your business and product
- The use of the NGINA logo
- Social Media posts from our Member Services Manager to your business



Representation

NGINA represents its members at all levels of government to ensure policy makers, regulators, and research and development opportunities are aware of your business priorities

- Representation through us to government, policy makers, regulators and research and development
- Eligibility to apply for NGINA board or advisory committees
- Business listing on our website & store locator so the local public can find you
- Our association offers a unique chance to meet celebrities and get up close and personal with some of the biggest names in the industry.

WHAT YOUR COMPANY CAN SAVE BY BEING A MEMBER:

HR & IR Advice line | \$3500

Average cost of an external support line

HR & IR Documents | \$5000

Average cost to create legal company specific HR & IR documents through a lawyer

WH&S Manual | \$5000

Average cost to create a legal company specific WH&S Manual through a lawyer

Jobs Listings | \$225

Per job: Posted on website, Instagram, Facebook, Linked In & eNews

N&G News Ads x 4 | \$6600

Yearly NSW Trade Day Entry | \$250

N&G News x 4 | \$50

Social Media Advertising | \$80

Forklift Training | \$300

Per person

Training Savings | \$150

Members get 10-20% off. Average calculated per person for 3 courses per year

Dell Australia, Choice Energy & Ledermans Insurance Brokers Commercial Member Discounts | \$2500+

Price may vary year to year

Meeting Room | \$500

Full day, fully equipped

GIA Register | \$2500

Non-member listing price

New Member Features | \$1100

Full page article/ad in N&G News, CEO welcome in eNews, Full ad with company links in eNews

Social Media Post | \$80

Recap of our visit and a blurb about your business on our Facebook and Instagram.

Store Locator | \$1000

Be found by the public and other industry professionals on our website store locator.

Website Links | \$500

Member feature on our website with all your contact details including backlinks to your website which assist in boosting SEO.

OTHER INVALUABLE SERVICES:

- NGINA staff technical support
- Freight savings at Trade Day
- Networking
- Exposure
- Information
- Professional Development

A TOTAL SAVING OF: \$30,515.00*

*Savings may vary year to year and are calculated by the average member potential savings



Pet Safe Plants

Written by Tara Preston

With a growing number of pet lovers wanting to add greenery to their homes the question of pet safe plants is a regular one asked of our retailers. With many plants being harmful or even toxic when ingested by curious dogs and cats careful selection of plants (particularly indoor) is key. In mild cases, harmful/toxic plants can cause rashes and inflammation but in more serious cases, they can cause intense gastrointestinal pain, vomiting, convulsions, spasms and damage to important organs, like the kidney and heart and in the worst cases can even cause death. Some customers may still want to buy their favorite plant which may not be safe – they will need to put them well out of reach of pets.



PLANTS TO AVOID OR PUT OUT OF REACH

Adenium
Aglaonema (Chinese Evergreen)
Alocasia (Elephant Ear)
Aloe
Anthurium (Flamingo Flower)
Begonia
Brunfelsia (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow)
Brugmansia
Caladium (Angel's Wings)
Clivia (Kaffir Lily)
Codiaeum variegatum (Croton)
Cordyline (Ti Plant)
Crassula (Jade Plant)
Cyclamen
Dieffenbachia (Dumb Cane)
Dracaena (Corn Plant, Dragon Tree)
Epipremnum (Pothos, Devil's Ivy)
Ficus (Rubber Tree, Weeping Fig)
Geranium
Hedera (Ivy)
Hippeastrum (Fire lily)
Helleborus (Winter Rose)

Hydrangea
Iris
Lavendula (Lavender)
Monstera (Swiss Cheese Plant)
Narcissus (Daffodils)
Origanum (Oregano)
Pelargonium (Geranium)
Pieris
Philodendron (Heartleaf)
Rhododendron (Azalea)
Sansevieria trifasciata
Schefflera actinophylla
Senecio
Strelitzia (Bird of Paradise)
Spathiphyllum (Peace Lily)
Syngonium (Arrowhead Vine)
Tulip
Tradescantia
Zamia (Cardboard Palm)
Zantedeschia (Arum or Calla Lily)



Please note this is not an exhaustive list and there are other plants toxic to pets

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR PET FRIENDLY PLANTS

Indoor Plants

Adiantum (Maiden Hair Fern)
Aeschynanthus (Lipstick Plant)
Aspidistra (Cast Iron Plant)
Asplenium (Birds Nest Fern)
Calathea (Rattle Snake Plant, Peacock Plant, Zebra Plant)
Chlorophytum (Spider Plant/Ribbon Plant)
Davallia (Rabbit's Foot Fern)
Fittonia (Nerve Plant)
Ludisia (Jewel Orchid)
Maranta (Prayer Plant)
Nephrolepis (Boston Fern)
Pellaea (Button Fern)
Peperomia (Baby Rubber Plant)
Phalaenopsis (Moth Orchid)
Pilea (Chinese Money Plant, Aluminum Plant)
Saintpaulia (African Violet)



Palms

Chamaedorea (Parlour Palm, Bamboo Palm)
Dypsis lutescens (Golden Cane Palm)
Howea (Kentia Palm)
Rhapis (Lady Palm)



Part Shade

Beaucarnea (Ponytail Palm)
Camellia
Canna (Canna lily)
Dionaea (Venus Fly Trap)
Fuchsia
Hoya (Wax Flower)
Hypoestes (Polka Dot Plant)
Impatiens (Busy Lizzy)
Iresine (Blood Leaf)
Ixora
Neoregelia (Bromeliad)
Platycerium (Elkhorn, Staghorn)
Plectranthus (Swedish Ivy)
Stephanotis (Madagascar Jasmine)
Streptocarpus (Nodding Violet)
Tillandsia (Airplants)



Grasses

Liriope (Lilyturf)
Lomandra (Mat-Rush)
Ophiopogon (Mondo grass)



Perennial/Colour

Alstroemeria (Peruvian Lily)
Calendula (Pot Marigold)
Coreopsis
Echinacea (Coneflower)
Felicia (Blue Marguerite)
Gerbera
Hibiscus
Kniphofia (Red Hot Poker)
Petunia
Phlox
Roses
Salvia
Zinnia

Native

Callistemon (Bottlebrush)
Leptospermum (Tea Tree)
Leucospermum (Pincushion Flower)
Lomandra
Syzygium (Lilly pilly)

Succulents and Cacti

Echeveria
Haworthia (Zebra Plant)
Mammillaria (Thimble Cactus)
Rhipsalis (Mistletoe Cactus)
Sedum (Donkeys Tail, Stone crop)
Zygocactus (Christmas Cactus)

Edible

Anethum graveolens (Dill)
Fragaria (Strawberry)
Ocimum basilicum (Basil)
Rosmarinus (Rosemary)
Thymus (Thyme)

Trees

Acer (Maple)
Magnolia
Lagerstromia (Crepe Myrtle)
Liriodendron (Tulip Tree)

Other

Carissa
Pittosporum (Silver Sheen, Miss Muffet)
Photinia (Red Robin)
Trachelospermum (Star Jasmine, Tricolour Jasmine)



CEO &
PRESIDENT
VISITS



NGINA

MEMBER

SITE

VISITS

WITH ANDY & MIKE

TOGETHER WE GROW!



MEMBER VISITS



Sydney Wildflower Nursery

Since 1983, Sydney Wildflower Nursery at Heathcote has been providing residents and visitors from around Australia with quality native Australian plants and supplying consistently for jobs big and small and they pride themselves on their knowledge, passion and extensive range of beautiful and unusual Australian native trees, shrubs and wildflowers.



Andy and Mike met with David Rose, the owner of Sydney Wildflower Nursery at Heathcote. This is a fantastic specialist Native Nursery with a great range of plants and staff that can assist with any plant needs you may have.

Mountain Range Nursery

The Mountain Range Nursery is one of the leaders in both the Australian and world markets, specialising in the wholesale and export of small seedlings of Kentia Palms and Norfolk Pines. For more than thirty years, they have serviced local councils, retail nurseries, landscapers, international developers and wholesalers throughout Australia, Europe, Asia, the USA, the Pacific Islands and the Middle East.



Andy and Mike spent some quality time with our long-standing member and owner Lance Carr. Lance is well known for his palms and Christmas trees and also runs a Community Farm that grows the most amazing range of produce.



He remains committed to supporting the local farming community and in ensuring that the Illawarra region continues to thrive.

Native Grace

Native Grace is a very special Australian native plant nursery, a dynamic garden design studio and a beautiful destination in the Southern Highlands. Traditionally, nurseries sell plants, designers design gardens and landscapers install landscapes. Native Grace offers all three services conveniently located at their atmospheric Robertson site.



The plants are stunning and all presented on raised tables. Luke and Merilyn have a great eye for detail and an absolute passion for plants and sustainability. They also have a donut van that was unfortunately closed when we visited, I understand that customers travel miles for these treats... Maybe next time!



Jamberoo Native Nursery

Based in the beautiful Jamberoo Valley this production nursery is passionate not only about producing the hardiest, healthiest Aussie plants they can, but also about the Australian environment. Their range includes *Acacia*, *Angophora*, *Anigozanthos*, *Banksia*, *Callistemon*, *Carex*, *Corymbia*, *Eucalyptus*, *Grevillea*, *Leptospermum*, *Melaleuca*, *Syzygium*, *Westringia* and more.



They believe that by growing fit-for-purpose species and educating their clients and the community on their importance in the environment and by playing their part in the fight to alleviate climate change, vegetation and habitat loss in Australia.



It was great to revisit the wonderful Jamberoo Native Nursery, Nathan continues to maintain the high standards that define this business, they are working towards regaining NIASA Accreditation and it shows. The nursery was immaculate and despite being the middle of winter the stock looked in good condition.

Yarralumla ACT Government Nursery

For more than 110 years, Yarralumla Nursery has been shaping Canberra's landscapes, supplying high-quality plants and setting the standard for Best Management Practices (BMP) in horticulture. As one of Australia's oldest nurseries, Yarralumla remains at the forefront of the industry through innovation, sustainability and a commitment to excellence. Operating on a 10-hectare site with a team of 30 dedicated staff, Yarralumla Nursery supplies plants to landscape contractors, councils, nurseries, government directorates and community programs like the Free Plant Issue.



For those that like clean water look at this setup, about to go into its testing phase before being fully commissioned. They also have a new Demtec potting machine.

MEMBER VISITS!



Willow Park Nursery

Willow Park Nursery is owned and operated by a Canberra family with a business history in the Canberra region dating back to the 1930's. At the time Willow Park was a market flower nursery used for growing cut gladioli and daffodils. The original homestead was built in 1932 and still stands in the front grounds among the shade of the established trees and gardens including some of the oldest trees in Canberra today.



Willow Park is an absolute standout retailer and their quality of stock is beautifully presented and merchandised despite being the middle of winter in Canberra. An inspirational retailer and a credit to the owners.

Gehl Garden Centre

The Gehl Garden Centre is a family owned and operated business that has serviced the Goulburn region for the past 25 years in all areas of horticulture. They have stood the test of time, dealing with droughts, ever-changing weather conditions, and economic ups-and-downs. With the ever changing industry they have diversified to meet all customer needs and demands.



Andy and Mike were warmly welcomed by Sally on a cold and bright winter morning. A hot coffee from the outstanding café was truly appreciated. This is a welcoming traditional style Garden Centre with lots of inspiring displays all beautifully created. Sally has plenty of ideas for the future.

Winter Hill Tree Farm

Winter Hill Tree farm was established in 1980. Since then Winter Hill Tree Farm has gained the experience and expertise which allows them to offer all trade and retail customers a selection of over 300 semi-mature to advanced trees, hedging and screening plants. Located at Canyonleigh in the Southern Highlands, Winter Hill capitalises on the optimum growing conditions provided by a climate that ensures hardy growth and sturdy stock.



They have a huge range of deciduous cool climate trees, ornamental specimen trees and evergreen trees as well as a range of species our experience has identified as perfect for streetscapes. If you like advanced cool climate trees this is the place for you! Andy and Mike were warmly welcomed by John Cameron who took them on a tour of the farm and continues to invest in the nursery infrastructure and developing the business.

Welby Garden Centre

At Welby Garden Centre, people come first. Since 1981, they have been more than just a destination for plants but more so a place of purpose, connection, and opportunity.

Every visit to this garden centre supports a greater mission: creating inclusive pathways to training and employment for people living with disabilities. The team brings passion, skill, and care to everything they do – from nurturing a wide collection of trees, roses, shrubs and flowering perennials, to helping you create a garden space that brings you joy.



Unfortunately, Justin the centre manager was unwell, but we were warmly welcomed by Aaron and Wayne who showed us around the business. This is much more than just a Garden Centre, they grow an amount of their own stock alongside manufacturing pallets, electronic components and running a commercial kitchen. They have plans to open a café in the coming months.



MEMBER VISITS!



The Heritage Nursery Yarralumma

Nestled in Weston Park beside Lake Burley Griffin, The Heritage Nursery has grown since its founding in 1996 into Canberra's premier garden centre. It offers an exceptional range of high-quality, climate-tolerant plants, including rare native specimens and ornamental trees, complemented by a beautiful selection of giftware. The nursery is proudly pet-friendly, welcoming furry friends on a leash, making it a true destination for the whole family. Visitors benefit from the expertise of qualified horticulturists, who provide tailored advice on plants for the Canberra region, ensuring every garden thrives. With its picturesque setting, friendly service, and dedication to customer satisfaction, The Heritage Nursery continues to help make garden dreams a reality.



Sunrise Nursery

Located in the historic coastal town of Helensburgh, Sunrise Nursery has been delighting customers for more than 58 years with its exceptional range of plants and welcoming atmosphere. Offering a carefully curated selection of native and exotic trees, shrubs, groundcovers, cacti, succulents, and potted plants, the nursery is as much an experience as it is a place to shop. Visitors can browse the extensive plant displays, seek expert advice from the friendly and knowledgeable team, explore a beautiful selection of homewares, and enjoy a relaxing break at the on-site Sunrise Café. With its commitment to plant quality, customer service, and creating a memorable destination for garden lovers, Sunrise Nursery continues to be a standout in the region.



Burnetts On Barney

Burnetts On Barney, founded in 2001 and relocated in 2012 to the historic Barney Street quarry in Kiama, is a leading garden centre and landscaping hub offering a full nursery, landscape supplies, homewares, gifts, and professional arborist services. The Quarry Café serves fresh, homestyle meals, cakes, and coffee in a dog-friendly setting with live music every Saturday. Actively engaged in the community, Burnetts hosts monthly Crop & Swap events, workshops, and supports local groups. Recognised with multiple awards, including the NGINA NSW & ACT People's Choice Garden Centre of the Year 2023, Best Small Retail Nursery in 2021 and 2023, and Kiama Business Network's Business of the Year 2025, it remains a destination for garden lovers and locals alike.



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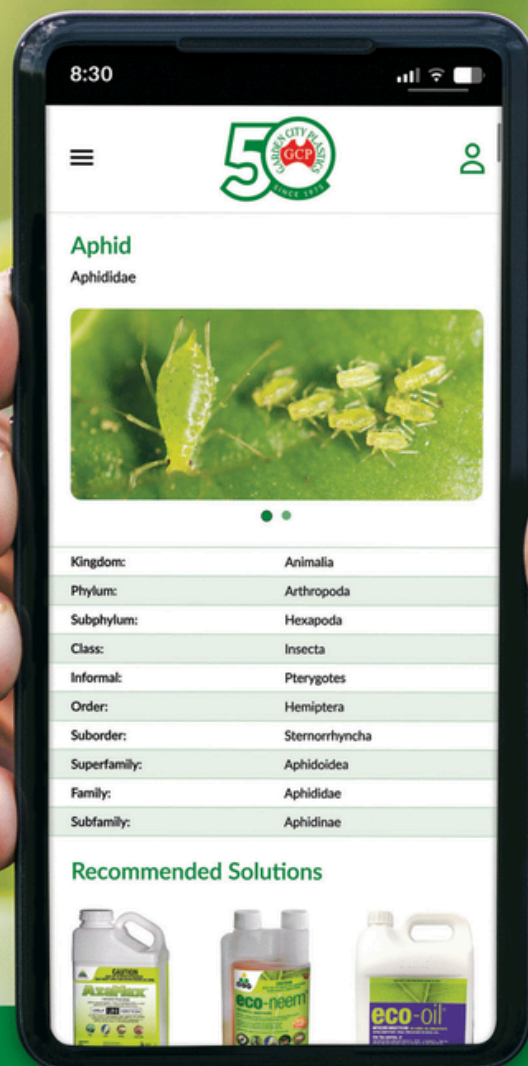


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INDUSTRY EVENTS



Nursery & Garden Industry
NSW & ACT

PIONEER'S LUNCH

On 12 June, we came together to celebrate the incredible people who have helped shape the nursery and garden industry in NSW & ACT. A heartfelt thank you to our VIP pioneers - your dedication, innovation and passion truly shoveled the way for the future of horticulture, and we are so grateful. Special thanks to Camerons Nursery for the stunning centrepieces that brought the tables to life, and to our guest speaker Steve Rixon, Head Teacher of Horticulture at TAFE NSW, for your continued support and contribution to industry excellence.

Here's to honouring the past while growing the future!



LEAN LEADERS

Several NGINA members are part of Moshie's Lean Leaders Program run at our NGINA office in Kenthurst. Lean Leaders is a 20-week, practical leadership development course tailored for individuals leading teams of any size. Through a blend of hands-on guidance and real-world application, participants gain clarity in leadership, learn to distinguish between management and true leadership, apply Lean principles to enhance operational efficiency, streamline workflows, and foster a continuous-improvement culture. The program emphasises measurable impact and participants work on meaningful projects within their own business, backed by Moshie's expert support and peer collaboration, driving tangible results and building lasting leadership capability.

Available online and in person - contact Josh from Moshie to learn more about future course dates at info@moshie.biz

ICG CONFERENCE

On July 10, Tara and Mike attended the IGC conference at Norths Cammeray. The content was excellent, starting with a very insightful presentation from The Retail Doctor. He had conducted mystery shopping as part of his presentation, and the results clearly showed that we need to improve our retail offer if we want to remain relevant. We also listened to talks on AI and on being mentally fit to run your business. Josh Zarb spoke passionately about working collaboratively within your buying group.

Overall, it was a very stimulating day. Unfortunately, numbers were down, and many members missed out on a great opportunity to learn and network with their peers.



SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL MARKETING MASTERCLASS

Held on Thursday 19 June, this year's sold-out Social Media & Digital Marketing Masterclass delivered another day of practical, industry-specific training tailored to greenlife businesses. Facilitated by NGINA's Marketing & Communications Manager Leisha Jordan, the course covered everything from social media basics and content creation in Canva to digital strategy, SEO, email marketing and website optimisation. Whether attending online or in person, participants walked away with actionable tools, worksheets and a clearer roadmap to boost their business's online presence. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants praising the course as "engaging," "informative," and "excellent value for money."

COSTING WORKSHOPS

On Friday 20 June, members took part in our Production Costings Workshop with Josh from Moshie, followed by a Retail Costings Workshop on Wednesday 6 August. Participants were guided through the use of real business reports such as labour costs, P&Ls, and sales data, to complete hands-on costing models and calculations. Both sessions equipped growers and retailers with one-on-one support and strategies to improve profitability through better understanding of costs, margins, and pricing. Thank you to Camerons Nursery for offering their board room for the retail costings workshop.

NIASA ACCREDITATION INFORMATION SESSION

Members joined Colin Hunt from GIA in person and online on Wednesday, 25 June for a half-day NIASA Accreditation Information Session. Attendees learnt what NIASA involves, how it supports best practice in production nurseries, and what steps to take to get accredited.

REGIONAL NETWORKING TOUR (SOUTH COAST/CANBERRA)

On 16–17 July 2025, NGINA President Andy Cameron and CEO Mike Mehigan hit the road for a Regional Networking Tour, connecting with members across the South Coast, Southern Highlands, Illawarra, and Canberra regions.

A highlight was the evening hosted by Elizabeth and her team at Burnetts On Barney Garden Centre in Kiama on Wednesday 16 July. Members gathered around the fire pit for pizza, wine, beer, and lively discussion. The atmosphere of community and camaraderie was undeniable, and it was agreed that these regional group gatherings should happen more often.

The following night, Thursday 17 July, members came together again for dinner in Canberra. In both locations, the warmth and generosity of our hosts were deeply appreciated, and the conversations were as valuable as they were enjoyable. These relaxed, members-only dinners offered an open forum for discussion, feedback, and idea-sharing which was a great way for the President and CEO to hear directly from members.

A recurring theme emerged: Many members are starting to think seriously about retirement and business succession. NGINA recognises the important role it can play in supporting this transition and looks forward to sharing ideas on how we can help in the coming weeks.



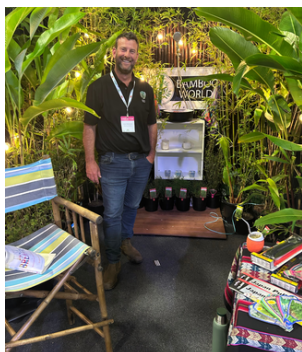
GREEN EXPO

NGINA CEO Mike Mehigan attended the Queensland Green Expo on 29–30 July 2025. While the event footprint was smaller than in previous years, the creativity, warmth, and energy on display were unmatched. Mike enjoyed reconnecting with members from both Queensland and New South Wales, noting that these face to face moments are the lifeblood of the sector. The venue's cosy layout created the perfect setting for meaningful conversations and new connections.

The show floor featured vibrant, well presented exhibits that showcased the passion and pride driving the greenlife industry, one standout display overflowed with dazzling hydrangeas.

The evening gala drew 215 attendees for dinner, with lively entertainment from a band and a cheeky comedy act. Expo award winners were honoured in a heartfelt ceremony that recognised their hard work and contributions to the industry.

Mike also attended the TLA Landscape Expo on 27 August and enjoyed seeing many members there. TLA kindly offered NGINA members subsidised entry.



TREE STOCK STANDARDS HALF DAY WORKSHOP

On Wednesday 16 July, members joined Colin Hunt from Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) for a practical half-day workshop exploring the Landscape Tree Stock Specification (LTSS). Held both in person at the NGINA office and online, the session provided a clear, accessible breakdown of the LTSS part of the NIASA subprogram offering best practice guidelines for producing high-quality tree stock. Tailored for nurseries supplying into the landscape, development, and government sectors, the workshop gave attendees practical tools to implement the specification within their own operations and improve overall tree stock quality.



FUTURE LEADERS VISIT QUEENSLAND FOR IMMERSIVE STUDY TOUR

By Tara Preston

Five outstanding nursery apprentices from across New South Wales were recently selected to take part in a fully funded Queensland study tour, delivered by Local Land Services (LLS) and supported by the Australian Government through the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program.

Held over two action-packed days on 29–30 July 2025, the tour offered a rare opportunity for apprentices enrolled in Nursery Operations (retail or production) to broaden their knowledge, connect with industry leaders, and gain valuable insights into the future of horticulture. A huge thank you to Hugh Littlefield for guiding the tour and mentoring our students.

A Packed Itinerary of Inspiration and Innovation

The tour began with a flight to the Gold Coast, where participants kicked off the experience with a visit to Green Expo at the Gold Coast Turf Club. This premier industry event showcased cutting-edge products, plant innovations, and sustainable practices, allowing the apprentices to engage directly with growers, suppliers, and trade experts.

From there, the group visited several standout nurseries and businesses known for their scale, sustainability, and industry leadership, including:

- **Harts Nursery:** A behind-the-scenes look at their production methods and plant innovation
- **Boyd's Bay Nursery:** A tour of their Piggabeen facility, highlighting large-scale landscaping production for commercial, governmental, residential and landscape development channels across the Eastern Seaboard.
- **Quality Indoor Foliage (QIF):** A detailed walkthrough of their premium indoor plant production facility. QIF is recognised as one of Australia's top indoor plant producers.
- **Alpine Nurseries Alstonville:** A state-of-the-art, 38-hectare facility, Alpine Nurseries Alstonville is part of Australia's largest wholesale nursery group. Students got insights into propagation, logistics, and workforce management
- **Eden at Byron:** A final stop offering a unique perspective on retail nursery operations with a focus on customer experience and presentation

Participants were accompanied by Hugh Littlefield from LLS who facilitated discussions around climate-smart agriculture, biosecurity, supply chain sustainability, and employment pathways in horticulture.



INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION

By exposing young horticulture professionals to real world operations, this study tour plays an important role in strengthening the industry's future workforce. LLS continues to invest in supporting early-career professionals through mentoring, upskilling, and hands-on experiences.

The success of this tour highlights the value of immersive learning and cross-state collaboration in horticulture – and for these five apprentices, it may well be the start of an exciting journey in Australia's thriving nursery industry.



A GATHERING OF ALL THINGS **GREEN** FOR THE
NURSERY AND GARDEN INDUSTRY

Upcoming NSW Trade Days

TUES 26 AUGUST MID NORTH COAST
TUES 9 SEPTEMBER NORTHERN RIVERS
WED 17 SEPTEMBER SYDNEY
WED 15 OCTOBER SYDNEY
WED 19 NOVEMBER SYDNEY
WED 10 DECEMBER SYDNEY



MID NORTH
COAST



SYDNEY



NORTHERN
RIVERS



Do you get our emails?

We regularly communicate with our members via email. If you feel you could be missing out on any of our emails please contact the office on **(02) 9679 1472** or email **info@ngina.com.au** so we can look into it for you.



NEW MEMBER



MACEY TREES
KENTHURST 2156

Macey Trees is based in the leafy Hills District, just North West of Sydney. Recently established and family run, we specialise in producing semi-established trees in growing bags ranging from 100L to 400L. By focusing on this segment, we are able to produce great value, high quality trees.

Our range includes, but is not limited to varieties of:

- Magnolia
- Pear
- Maple
- Olive
- Lilly Pilly

We have been working closely with local and regional customers and suppliers and welcome any enquiries or orders at maceytrees@gmail.com



NEW MEMBER



Meet Mr Bamboo Wholesale. Their dedication to quality and sustainable growth aligns perfectly with our mission to support best practice in the nursery and garden industry.

Just west of Kempsey on the NSW Mid-North Coast, the team at Mr Bamboo Wholesale bring over 40 years of expertise, supplying more than 40 diverse species of bamboo ranging from clumping ornamentals to screening varieties.

Please reach out to Georgia or Luke for information & advice, wholesale pricing and all things bamboo.

0409 052 005

Website



**SO MANY
PEOPLE LOVE BAMBOO.
WE'VE BEEN COLLECTING & GROWING
SINCE THE LATE 70S.
OUR SPECIES ARE CHOSEN FOR URBAN
LANDSCAPING, HIDING THE NEIGHBOURS.
AND TO ADMIRE.
LOVING BAMBOO IS GENETIC.
WE DO IT. WHOLESALE.**



NEW MEMBER

Frank's Plantorium is a creative nursery hire business in Mascot, Sydney, specialising in live and artificial greenery, pots, and props for the film, television, and events industries. Starting from a humble backyard in Rosebery, their journey has grown from a passion for plants and strong connections with art department professionals into a go-to resource for natural set dressing.

What they offer:

From outdoor plants and indoor greenery (small to large) to cacti, succulents, and premium artificial plants, Frank's Plantorium has it covered. Their extensive range of pots and covers, terracotta, ceramic, concrete, fibreglass, PVC, baskets, and more ensures every aesthetic brief can be met.

With over 30 years of experience, every item is sourced from their Sydney greenhouses and selected for quality. Whether it's a mature tree or a single accent plant, they know how to deliver the right piece.

Sustainable service model:

Items are hired on a weekly basis, with pick-up from Mascot (by appointment) or delivery and collection available. The process is simple, submit a wishlist, receive a quote, confirm, and collect or arrange delivery with clear invoicing and prompt communication.

Their story:

Frank's Plantorium began when Frank the dog needed more space, prompting a move and the creation of a thriving plant collection first offered to friends in the art department. Today, their greenery features on sets across Sydney and beyond. Frank may have passed, but his legacy lives on in their logo and every project they support.

Contact

Showroom: Mascot NSW, by appointment only
Phone: 02 9388 9704
Email: hello@franksplants.com.au



Website



Instagram



NURSERY PAPERS

JULY
2025

PRODUCTION NURSERY SALES HOLD FIRM AT \$2.65 BILLION

For the eighth year in a row, the greenlife industry has taken stock – and while market conditions are tightening, the sector remains resilient.

KEY POINTS

- For the eighth year in a row, the greenlife industry has been surveyed to measure production nursery sales, sentiment, employment, and investment.
- Production nursery sales in Australia have remained buoyant, valued at \$2.65 billion in 2023–24, down 4% on 2022–23.
- While profitability is trending slightly down, landscape, consumer and environmental markets represent opportunities for industry growth.

Despite ongoing challenges related to cost of living and global trade tensions, production nursery sales in Australia have remained buoyant, valued at \$2.65 billion in 2023–24.

This represents a modest annual decline of just 4% from \$2.78 billion in 2022–23.

That's according to the recently released levy-funded 2023–24 Production Nursery Data Capture Report, which assessed data from 297 growers surveyed across Australia; 171 via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews, 56 via email and 69 through an online platform.

The results have informed the development of a business benchmarking tool, produced and updated annually by ACIL Allen and distributed to survey participants and other levy payers on request. The tool is available to levy payers to assess core aspects of their business against others operating in similar markets or segments.

The findings of the survey provide valuable information to both growers and the broader sector, which can help decision making, resource prioritisation, investment evaluation and strategic planning.

JUST TELL ME

Despite rising costs and a small dip in sales, most growers remain confident about the future. Use the insights (and benchmarking tool) to spot opportunities, cut waste and stay competitive.

Funding for this project is provided by the nursery levy, contributed by growers like you.



SNAPSHOT: 2023–24 AT A GLANCE

**\$2.65
BILLION**

WAS MADE IN
SALES, AROUND
4% LESS THAN THE
PREVIOUS YEAR

THOUGH
PROFITABILITY IS
TRENDING DOWN,
LANDSCAPE,
CONSUMER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
MARKETS
REPRESENT
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR INDUSTRY
GROWTH

THE AUSTRALIAN
NURSERY SECTOR
EMPLOYS ALMOST

22,500

PEOPLE ACROSS
EVERY STATE AND
TERRITORY

72%

OF GROWERS ARE
CONFIDENT ABOUT
THE FUTURE OF
THE SECTOR

48%

OF GROWERS
ARE INVESTING IN
INFRASTRUCTURE,
TECHNOLOGY AND
TRAINING

WHAT THE NUMBERS ARE TELLING US

Industry snapshot

In 2023–24, while demand remained steady and the outlook for the sector was robust, positive sentiment has trended downwards over the past few years in line with a contracting market.

The intention to expand businesses has reduced, almost exclusively among operators with a turnover of less than \$2 million per year, with production costs identified by respondents as the greatest constraint to business growth.

Despite these factors, confidence in the sector's future has remained relatively stable, particularly among medium and large enterprises.

Plant value and sales categories

The survey asked growers to categorise the plants they sold, and the findings revealed that the value of all plant sales categories had marginally reduced during 2023–24. The most popular plant categories were:

- perennials, trees and shrubs (47% of total plants sold)
- propagation (12% of total plants sold)
- indoor (12% of total plants sold).

Nursery sector threats

Input costs are the most commonly nominated challenge impacting nurseries as indicated by 90% of respondents. The data also revealed 67% of growers are worried about biosecurity challenges, 66% view severe weather as a threat, and 59% cited the ability to secure insurance as increasingly difficult (a jump from 43% in 2022–23).

In addition, skilled and unskilled labour shortages are currently impacting 61% and 47% of businesses respectively, and this increased to 86% and 72% among those turning over more than \$4 million.

Productivity

Respondent data suggests that production businesses continue to generate substantial turnover (about \$446,000 of turnover per hectare). This is consistent with results from 2022–23.

Sentiment and future opportunities

Sector confidence remains buoyant with 72% of respondents feeling positive about the sector's future.

Likewise, the proportion of businesses reporting expansion reduced to the lowest level in the history of the survey (26%), with nurseries turning over under \$2 million most likely to wind down trade.

Nonetheless, substantial growth potential remains as 41% of businesses, particularly larger operators, reported plans to expand in the next five years.

Landscape, consumer and environmental categories were the most commonly cited areas of opportunity.

Technology

One in four businesses nationally (25%) had invested in new technology; a significant decrease since 2022–23 (31%) and the lowest rate since this survey's inception. As with the last survey, the incidence of technology investment increased in line with business size, from 10% in small enterprises to 48% of those with more than \$2 million in turnover.

This downtrend is on par with the contracting market conditions, yet new technology remains widespread in the largest of businesses.

Human resources

Respondent data shows that the nursery production workforce of approximately 22,500 people is lower than in 2022–23 (23,500 people). This equates to around 19,200 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, down from the almost 20,000 FTEs reported in the previous period.

On average, business turnover per FTE was similar to that of the previous financial year: \$184,000 in 2023–24 and \$177,000 in 2022–23.



The average wage paid during 2023–24 per FTE, including owners, held relatively steady at approximately \$67,000 compared to \$63,000, and net wage costs of \$1.294 billion had risen slightly from \$1.244 billion. Of note, wage costs represented a higher proportion of overall turnover in 2023–24 than in past years, increasing from 35% to 38%.

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT

While tech investment dipped slightly overall, **48% of larger nurseries are still adopting new systems** – from automated irrigation to climate control.

WHY BENCHMARK?

Data-driven insights don't just look good on paper – they improve your bottom line. By comparing your business to industry peers, benchmarking helps you:

- **STREAMLINE OPERATIONS**
- **REDUCE COSTS**
- **DRIVE INNOVATION**
- **MAKE SMARTER DECISIONS**
- **GAIN A COMPETITIVE EDGE.**

How benchmarking can boost your bottom line

IMPROVED EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY	Identify inefficient or unproductive business operations, so you can streamline processes and reduce waste
COST REDUCTION	Identify opportunities to reduce expenses without compromising quality or performance
ENHANCED PERFORMANCE	Identify areas to implement improvements that lead to higher performance and profitability
INNOVATION AND GROWTH	Benchmarking can expose you to new ideas and practices that can drive innovation and growth within your business
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE	Identify areas to improve and gain a competitive edge in the market
BETTER CUSTOMER UNDERSTANDING	Help you tailor your offerings and improve customer satisfaction
IMPROVED DECISION MAKING	Make more informed decisions about investments, resource allocation and other key strategies

HOW TO USE THIS DATA TO BOOST YOUR BUSINESS

The benchmarking data tool empowers growers to make informed strategic and operational decisions for their businesses by allowing them to leverage robust data.

With eight years' worth of data available for analysis, this tool is a powerful resource for nursery industry participants. The tool lets you measure performance against surveyed peers, comparing sales values and volumes by product type and market segment within the sector.

The data is categorised into four annual turnover ranges:

- <\$500,000
- \$500,000 – \$2 million
- \$2 million to \$4 million
- >\$4 million.

Additionally, you can use the tool to assess your position within the sales value, employment, wages and cost metrics ranges, as well as to gauge business sentiment around profitability and the sector's future.

This tool provides a valuable foundation for business owners to

overlay their own data and make informed decisions for the future.

As in previous years, the benchmarking tool is made up of four key components:

- an overview of the 2022–23 results and trends over time.
- sales – growers can input their own data for comparison.
- employment and costs – growers can input their own data for comparison.
- sector sentiment – growers can input their own data for comparison.



WHO IS USING THE BENCHMARKING TOOL?

Nationally, almost one in five (17%) respondents or someone within their business has used the benchmarking data tool. Notably, this varies from 7% of small operators to a significantly higher proportion (31%) of large businesses.

The report findings not only offer compelling evidence to individual production nurseries, showcasing the industry's health, resilience and strength, but they also provide the broader industry with a powerful dataset for shaping industry growth and development.

To get the most of this project, we encourage you to actively harness the benchmarking tool by applying the findings to your nursery operations. Doing so provides deeper insights into past performance, paving the way for a more prosperous future.

**Celeste Cook, APPS Administrator,
Extension Officer TAS/SA**

Don't miss out. If you're a production nursery, email **info@greenlifeindustry.com.au** for access to the 2024 tool.

ON THE GROUND

We used the benchmarking tool to compare our cost structures with others in our bracket. It was eye-opening — especially the wage costs breakdown. We've made some changes already.

Queensland grower

MORE INFORMATION

You can also check out:

- the 2023–24 Production Nursery Data Capture Report – <https://www.greenlifeindustry.com.au/communications-centre/2023-24-data-capture-report>
- more stats project information – www.greenlifeindustry.com.au/about/projects-programs/stats
- past nursery papers – www.greenlifeindustry.com.au/communications-centre

BONUS RESOURCE

Want to know how your production nursery stacks up? Check out the Nursery Industry Business Benchmarking Tool to measure your performance against your peers. Request the tool from Celeste Cook, GIA's Extension Officer TAS/SA at: celeste.cook@greenlifeindustry.com.au

NGINA and Macquarie University Project Summary: Building Water Resilience in Production Nurseries

Understanding and Mitigating Water Storage Contamination in the Nursery Industry

The Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT Ltd (NGINA), in collaboration with Macquarie University, has successfully completed a major research project focused on understanding and managing water storage contamination concerns in production nurseries. This initiative, proudly funded Australian and NSW Governments through the Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program (SFIRP), was launched in response to the severe flood and storm events of 2021, which posed significant threats to the horticultural industry across NSW and the ACT.

Why this project matters

Water is essential to nursery operations, yet extreme weather events increase the risk of contamination from a range of pollutants including sediment, salt, nutrients, heavy metals, weed seeds, and plant pathogens. Contaminants can enter water storages from within nursery sites or via upstream catchment runoff during floods. If not managed effectively, this contamination can severely impact plant health, productivity, and downstream environments.

This project was made possible through the NSW Government's Storm and Flood Industry Recovery Program – Sector Recovery and Resilience Grant, following the widespread damage caused by the 2021 flood events. It addresses an urgent industry need for practical solutions to protect water resources and mitigate future storm and flood impacts.

Project objectives and approach

The project had three main objectives:

1. **Assess** the contamination risks to nursery water storages following storm and flood events.
2. **Increase** industry awareness of water quality and risk factors.
3. **Develop** a practical framework and supporting tools to help mitigate water contamination risks.

A five-stage plan guided the project

- Industry consultation and identification of concerns.
- Development of conceptual models to understand contamination processes.
- Spatial mapping and analysis of 95 nursery sites to assess water flow paths, potential inundation zones, and landscape risks.
- On-ground assessment of 10 focus nurseries in Northern Rivers, Central Coast, and Northern Sydney, including detailed water and sediment testing.
- Development of an adaptive, evidence-based management framework and suite of resources tailored to the production nursery context.



Extensive engagement with growers was critical to shaping the project. NGINA and Macquarie University hosted workshops, online forums, and site visits to gather input from nursery managers and ensure that the outputs aligned with industry needs. Macquarie University internship students also contributed to data collection and analysis, gaining valuable field and research experience.

Key outcomes

The research revealed that flood-related contamination risks vary depending on the location of nurseries within their catchments. Nurseries in lower catchment zones are more exposed to incoming contaminants and floodwaters, while those higher in the catchment mostly deal with direct rainfall.

Major outputs from the project include:

- A comprehensive framework outlining practical actions nurseries can take before, during, and after a flood event.
- A series of 15 water quality fact sheets explaining key contamination topics such as pH, salinity, turbidity, pathogens, and nutrients.
- Over 100 customised maps detailing catchment settings, water flow paths, and inundation hotspots for participating nurseries.
- Scientific data and case studies to inform future water monitoring and risk management.
- Publication of a peer-reviewed review article on waterborne contaminants in high-intensity plant production, giving the project national and international relevance (Gomes et al., 2025).



Site testing and monitoring insights

The 10 focus nurseries involved in the project conducted water testing across multiple intervals between May 2023 and March 2024. Analyses included key physical, chemical, and biological parameters such as pH, electrical conductivity (EC), turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and nutrient concentrations. Results varied between sites and across seasons, reinforcing the value of ongoing monitoring.

Overall, water quality generally met acceptable standards for irrigation, with no detections of faecal coliforms or extreme pH levels. Seasonal fluctuations were noted in EC, nutrient load, and oxygen levels, providing important context for future water management. These site-specific insights allowed nursery managers to validate their existing water practices and apply the project's risk management framework to identify opportunities for improvement. The findings illustrate how scientific tools and resources can be applied directly to support evidence-based decision-making in production nurseries.



Tools to support industry preparedness: NGINA and Macquarie University produced a suite of publicly accessible resources to help growers assess and manage risk:

- **Water Quality Fact Sheets:** Easy-to-understand guides covering key water quality parameters.
- **Mapping Guide:** Visual tools showing topographic features, catchment positions, and potential water contamination pathways.
- **Risk Management Framework:** A three-phase adaptive management cycle (Pre-event, During-event, Post-event) offering step-by-step actions.

All resources are available via NGINA website and are designed to support long-term resilience planning and decision-making in nurseries of all scales.

About the Risk Management Framework

At the heart of the project is the "Framework to identify and mitigate water storage contamination concerns at NSW and ACT production nurseries," a practical guide designed to help nursery managers assess, prepare for, and respond to water contamination risks.



The framework is built around a three-phase adaptive management cycle:

- **Pre-event:** Guidance on how to assess site vulnerabilities, monitor water quality, and implement preventative infrastructure and practices. This includes mapping of flood risk areas, evaluating storage design, and identifying upstream risks.
- **During-event:** Immediate response actions to minimise the impact of floodwaters, including protecting key infrastructure and diverting contaminated runoff where feasible.
- **Post-event:** Recovery and remediation steps, such as sampling and testing water, cleaning storage infrastructure, and reviewing operational practices.

Looking ahead As the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events increase, this project equips the industry with scientific knowledge and practical tools to better safeguard water resources. By promoting awareness, building preparedness, and enhancing resilience, the outcomes of this project support not just nursery productivity, but broader environmental and economic sustainability. NGINA would like to thank all participating nurseries, the NSW and Australian governments, and our academic partners at Macquarie University for their support in delivering this vital project.

Further reading

- Ralph et al. (2025). Framework to identify and mitigate water storage contamination concerns at NSW and ACT production nurseries. <https://doi.org/10.25949/AS0X-VX91>
- Ralph et al. (2025). Water quality fact sheets for production nurseries. <https://doi.org/10.25949/JH43-4N56>
- Gomes et al. (2025). Waterborne contaminants in high intensity agriculture and plant production. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.178084>

Water Sampling

OVERVIEW

- Collecting water samples for further testing is a good way to assess and monitor water quality and identify potential issues.
- Selecting the right time to collect water samples is important, with factors including recent weather, storm and flood events, and water levels to be considered.
- If your sample cannot be sent to the laboratory immediately, follow their instructions for storage.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

- Fill out a collection form with sample details (**Figure 1**).
 - Include contact information, sample location and date, and which tests you want performed.
- Label a sample container (**Figure 2**).
 - Check that the sample label matches the form.
 - Label top and sides of container.
- Collect a water sample (**Figure 3**).
 - Use appropriate PPE, including disposable gloves.
 - Try to collect water without disturbing the underlying sediment.
 - Try to collect water from the middle of the water column (not exclusively from the surface).
- Place the water sample container in a sample bag.
 - Wipe off the sample container so that the interior of the bag stays dry, then carefully seal and label the bag.
- Affix the collection form to the sample bag and ready for delivery to the laboratory for analysis (**Figure 4**).



Figure 1. Filling out the sample collection form.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Collecting water samples to send to a laboratory for testing of water quality parameters is a fast and simple way to assess water quality.
- Label sample collection forms and containers consistently and in multiple locations.
- Collect water samples without disturbing underlying sediment for more accurate results.

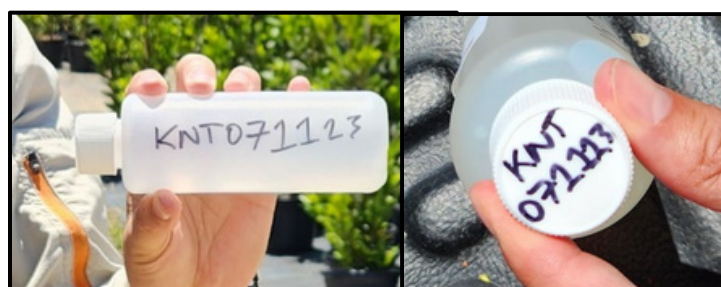


Figure 2. Labeled sample containers on top and sides.



Figure 3. Collecting a sample from a shallow water column.



Figure 4. Affixing the sample collection form to the sample bag and preparing the sample for delivery to the laboratory.

Nutrients

OVERVIEW

- Macro- and micro-nutrients are essential for healthy plant growth.
- In a water source, high nutrients and increased temperature can lead to an increase in biological growth and harmful algal blooms.
- Algae blooms (**Table 1**) and biofilm or bacterial growths can block irrigation equipment and may be health hazards for humans, plants, or animals.
- In some cases, excess nutrients allow blue-green algae to grow in the soil of container plants, potentially leading to pathogenic collar rot fungi.
- More information is available from NSW DPI: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/water/quality/pubs-and-info/blue-green-algae>

Common name	Scientific name
Filamentous green algae	<i>Godophora spp.</i> <i>Hydrodictyon spp.</i> <i>Spirogyra spp.</i>
Stoneworts	<i>Chara spp.</i> <i>Nitella spp.</i>
Blue-green algae	<i>Anocystis cyonea</i> <i>Anabaena circinalis</i>
Diatoms	<i>Navicula spp.</i> <i>Cyclotella spp.</i> <i>Aulacoseira spp.</i>
Euglenoids	<i>Euglena spp.</i>

Table 1. Common types of algae found in water sources.

KEY FACTORS

- Overapplication of fertilisers can lead to excess nutrients and the accumulation of salts and toxic ions in plants.
- Overwatering can lead to nutrients leaching out of container plants into drains, where they eventually accumulate in a water source.
- Surface runoff from agricultural, urban, and industrial areas can introduce nutrients, sediments, and organic matter into water sources, resulting in increased algal growth and turbidity levels.
- Erosion and bushfires, particularly preceding large storms, can result in increased nutrient loads in water sources.

HIGHLIGHTS

- It is important to test water nutrient concentrations, allowing the development of a targeted treatment plan.
- Treatment of nutrients in irrigation water is essential for maintaining optimal conditions for plant growth while preventing nutrient-related issues, including over-fertilisation, nutrient imbalances, and environmental contamination.

MANAGEMENT

- Keep nutrient concentrations in irrigation water within the recommended limits (**Table 2**).
- Regular testing of water quality will help track nutrients in irrigation water and pick treatments.
- Reverse osmosis (RO) systems remove a wide range of nutrients. RO water can be used to dilute nutrient-rich water.
- Filtration systems, settling tanks, aeration pumps, and sedimentation basins can be used to remove particulate matter, which may carry nutrients.

Macronutrients	Upper limit for greenhouse plants
TotalNitrogen	<5 mg/L
Nitrate	<5 mg/L
Ammonium	<5 mg/L
Phosphorus	<0.05 mg/L
Phosphate	<0.05 mg/L
Potassium	<3 mg/L
Calcium	<120 mg/L
Magnesium	<25mg/L
Sulfur and Sulfate	20–30 mg/L
Micronutrients	
Aluminium	<5 mg/L
Boron	<0.5 mg/L
Copper	<0.2 mg/L
Fluoride	<1 mg/L
Iron	<0.2 mg/L
Manganese	<0.2 mg/L
Zinc	<2 mg/L

Table 2. Recommended concentration limits for nutrients in irrigation water for greenhouse and nursery plants (NSW DPI, 2021; ANZECC & ARMCANZ, 2000; UC Cooperative Extension, 2009), Cassanti et al., 2012).

Adaptive Management

OVERVIEW

- Adaptive management refers to the practice of working to solve a problem by evaluating and learning from the effects of prior actions (**Figure 1**).
- Using an adaptive management approach may take additional time and effort at first, but it is likely to save time in the long-term.
- Keeping organized, consistent records is a key part of adaptive management.
- The approach will depend on the nature of the problem and actions planned to address it.
- Adopting an adaptive management framework approach drawing on existing and new information to identify and prioritise actions can help build resilience in the production nursery industry to storm and flood events.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Adaptive management is a conceptual framework to help guide decision-making, assessment, and monitoring.
- Identify the goals and strategy before taking actions.
- Collect samples consistently so that you can determine if actions were effective.
- Adaptive management is a flexible cycle that builds learning from experiences, so that if a strategy or an action is not working, they can be refined or replaced by new ones.
- For more information, see: Ralph, T.J., Graves, B.P., Gomes, M., 2025. Framework to identify and mitigate water storage contamination concerns at NSW and ACT production nurseries. Macquarie University. <https://doi.org/10.25949/AS0X-VX91>

STARTING POINT

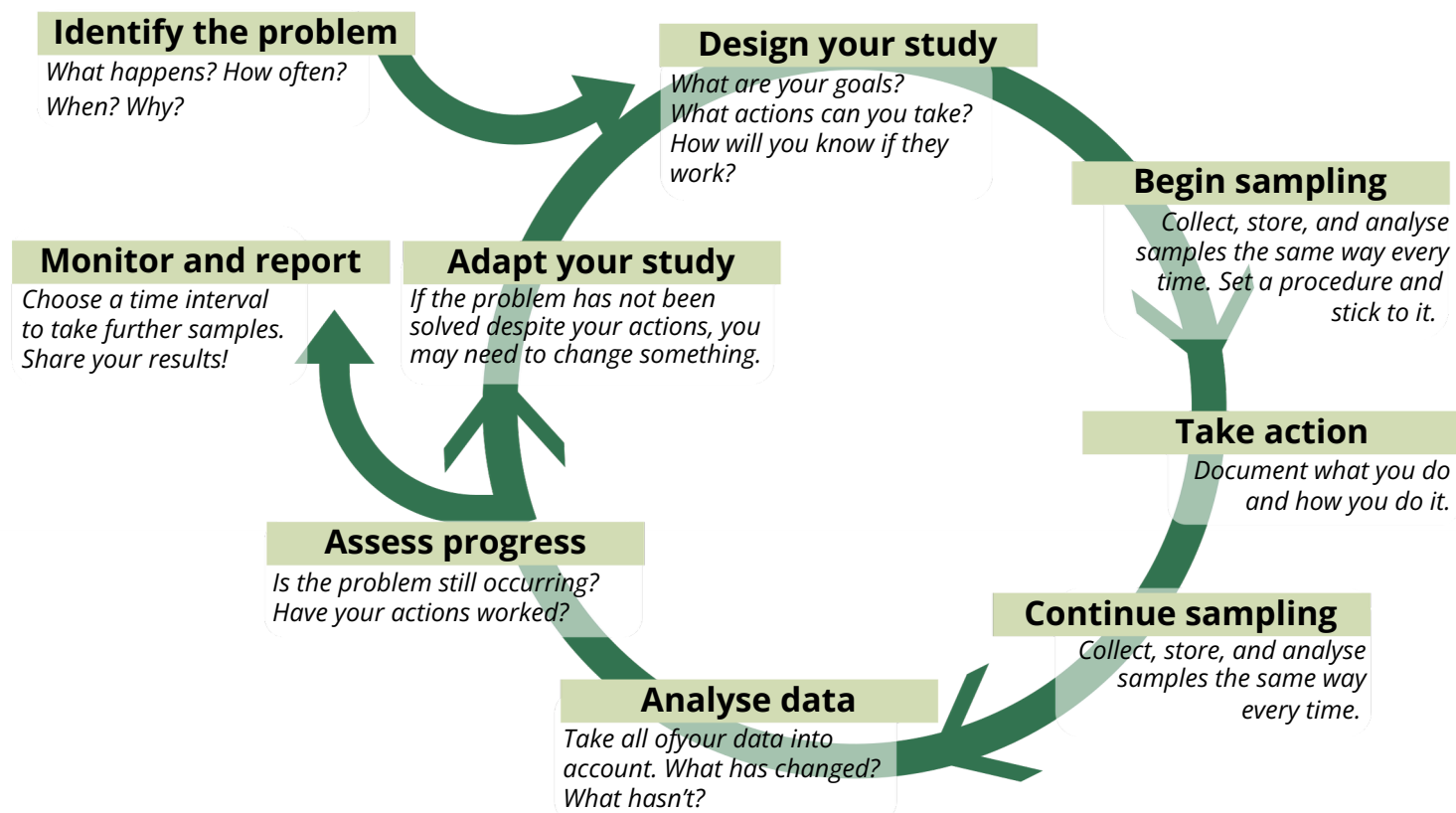


Figure 1. An example adaptive management cycle that is a structured, iterative process for decision-making and focuses on adjusting management strategies based on outcomes and new information.

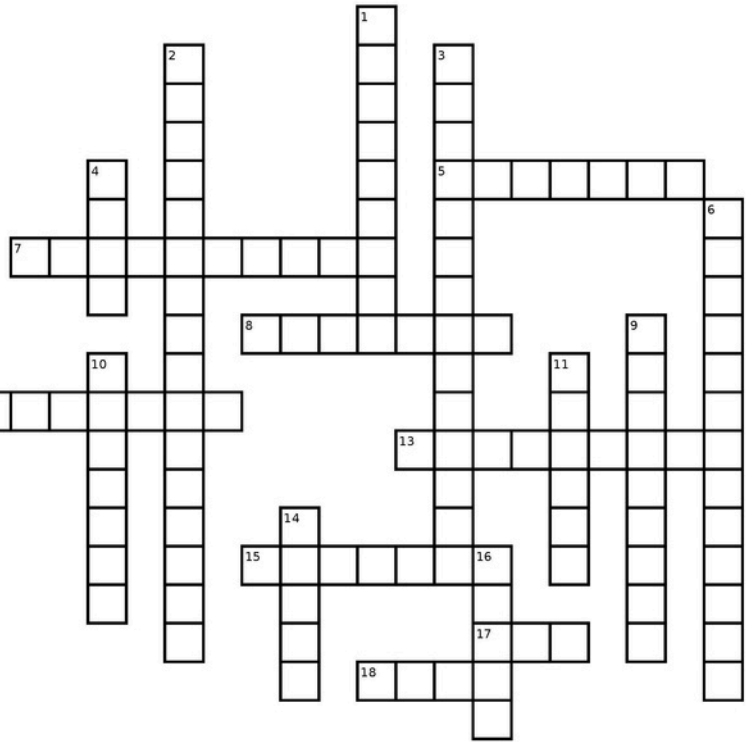
CROSSWORD

DOWN

- [1] A plant adapted to dry conditions.
 [2] Gardening technique involving layers of organic matter.
 [3] Natural process where plants use sunlight to make food.
 [4] Invasive plant species often unwanted in gardens.
 [6] Process of moving a plant from one location to another.
 [9] Type of garden designed to conserve water.
 [10] A type of pot made from biodegradable material.
 [11] Tiny organism that can cause plant disease.
 [14] The part of the plant that absorbs water and nutrients.
 [16] The edible underground part of a plant.

ACROSS

- [5] Structure used to support tomatoes or beans.
 [7] Garden structure used to protect plants from weather.
 [8] A method of propagating plants using a piece of stem or leaf.
 [12] Tool used for trimming small branches or stems.
 [13] A plant that lives for more than two years.
 [15] Common term for soil made from decayed organic matter.
 [17] Insect that benefits gardens by pollinating flowers.
 [18] A climbing plant that needs support.



*How well do you
know your greenlife?*

SUDOKU LEVEL: MEDIUM

1	3			2	6		5	7
8		5	1	4	7		3	
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		4	6					5
		1			5			
2		7		3			6	
	9	8				7		2
			2					
		2		6				

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FROM PLANT TO PLATE

With Leisha Jordan

I first saw a friend make this at a picnic, casually whipping out some corn chips to go with it. At first, I was a bit skeptical about the ingredients... mango in a salad? No thanks! But oh my, don't knock it 'till you try it. This Tropical Caribbean Salsa is that fresh, filling, and delicious that I dare you not to eat the whole bowl! The sweetness of ripe mango, the creaminess of avocado, and the tangy lime come together in the most perfect way. Whether you enjoy it with chips, tacos, jerk chicken or grilled fish, it's a guaranteed crowd-pleaser that always gets compliments and brings something a little different to the table. As the weather warms up, bring a burst of sunshine and island vibes to your next meal!

Ingredients

TROPICAL CARIBBEAN SALSA

Prep Time: 15 mins **Cook Time:** 0 min **Serves:** 4 - 6

- 1 ripe mango, diced
- 1-2 ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1 ripe avocado, diced
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt (or to taste)
- Juice of 1 lime
- Fresh coriander or parsley, chopped (optional)
- 1 small chili or jalapeño, finely chopped (optional, for a spicy kick)

Method

1. **Prepare the Ingredients:** Peel and dice the mango, avocado, and tomatoes. Finely chop the red onion (if using), cilantro, and chili (if using).
2. **Mix the Salsa:** In a medium bowl, combine the diced mango, tomatoes, avocado, and red onion.
3. **Season:** Drizzle with olive oil, squeeze in fresh lime juice, and sprinkle with sea salt. Toss gently to combine, being careful not to mash the avocado.
4. **Optional Add-ins:** Add the chopped cilantro or parsley and chopped chili for extra flavour.
5. **Serve:** Enjoy the salsa immediately with tortilla chips, tacos, grilled fish or jerk chicken, or as a side to any meal that could use a fresh, vibrant topping!

Thank you to our NGINA Partners

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By partnering with us:

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- ✓ **Your business** will benefit from the opportunity of open communication with decision makers and key people in NSW and ACT's nursery and garden industry.

NGINA Partner Benefits can include *

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- Opportunity to speak at a Regional Group event
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- Fulfilment report (a formal report that shows you exactly how we delivered on our promise)
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Complimentary tickets to awards night and gala dinner | Opportunity to speak at events | Presentation of an award | Major key partner recognition at events | Logo on event promotional material | Complimentary tickets to other NGINA networking events | Logo on pull-up partner banner at all events

Partnership Opportunities

Off-The-Shelf Packages

We offer various partnership packages; **diamond, platinum, gold, silver and bronze** all of which offer year-round access and exposure to NGINA members through events, print and digital media, and exclusive networking opportunities.

Customised Packages

In the event our off-the-shelf packages don't provide exactly what you're looking for, NGINA's flexible approach means that together we can tailor a package that meets your needs and requirements. To discuss this option further please call the office on (02) 9679 1472. All partners will receive a fulfilment report at the end of the 12-month period.

To become a partner or for more information scan the QR code or contact NGINA:
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e: info@ngina.com.au

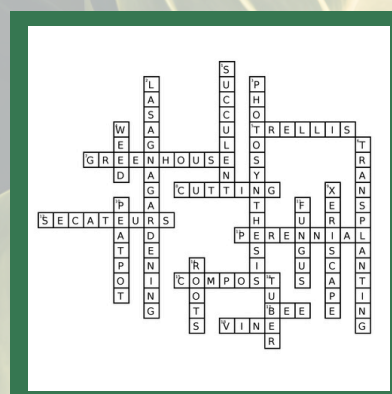


ANSWERS

SUDOKU

1	3	9	8	2	6	4	5	7
8	2	5	1	4	7	6	3	9
7	4	6	5	9	3	2	8	1
3	8	4	6	1	2	9	7	5
9	6	1	4	7	5	3	2	8
2	5	7	9	3	8	1	6	4
6	9	8	3	5	4	7	1	2
4	7	3	2	8	1	5	9	6
5	1	2	7	6	9	8	4	3

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