



# RETAIL NURSERY OF THE YEAR

## 2025 Award Judging Criteria and Scoring Sheet

### Eligibility:

Applicants must be members of the NGINA

### Judging Process:

- Stage 1: Remote Judging of Application
- Stage 2: Onsite Judging
- Stage 3: Mystery Shopping and Peer Judging

Note: Only finalists progress to Stage 2 and 3.

1 = Extremely Poor, 2 = Very Poor, 3 = Poor, 4 = Fair, 5 = Satisfactory, 6 = Satisfactory Plus, 7 = Good, 8 = Very Good, 9 = Excellent, 10 = Exceptional.

## STAGE 1 JUDGING – Remote

### Category: Marketing

Criteria		Score (1–10)	Comments
1	Development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing plan with clear objectives and consistent branding.		

Criteria		Score (1–10)	Comments
2	Effective use of social media platforms for marketing with regular and engaging content (mix of informative and promotional).		
3	Well-maintained and informative website with good usability and e-commerce capability or online inventory listings		
4	Effective digital marketing strategies, including SEO, email marketing, and content marketing.		
5	Responsive to online customer enquiries		
6	Organisation of events and activities to engage customers including plant care workshops.		
7	Engagement with local community including community gardens, swap sells, garden competitions, fundraisers & seniors activities.		

### Category: Management & Business Practices

Criteria		Score (1–10)	Comments
8	Clearly defined areas of responsibility and job descriptions for efficient operations.		
9	Effective internal communications to staff members regarding promotions, updates and plans		
10	Focus on human resources, including compliance with employment laws and physical and mental wellbeing.		
11	Offer staff development and training, yearly performance reviews, and outlined career pathways within company		
12	Development and implementation of a short and long-term business plan.		
13	Establishment and monitoring of key performance indicators (KPI's) to measure productivity and profitability.		

## STAGE 2 JUDGING - ONSITE

### Category: Premises & Facilities

Criteria		Score (1–10)	Comments
14	Cleanliness and tidiness of premises, including paths, buildings, exterior areas		
15	Adequate and well-maintained car parking facilities		
16	Signage and clear identification of different areas/categories		
17	First impressions, ambience, and overall aesthetic appeal of the nursery		
18	Sustainability practices (plastic pot recycling, energy-efficient equipment, water recycling, etc.)		

### Category: Layout and Accessibility

Criteria		Score (1–10)	Comments
19	Well-designed and logical layout for outdoor and indoor areas		
20	Visibility and easy access to all areas for customers		
21	Effective use of display stands, endcaps, and fixtures to showcase products		

### Category: Housekeeping and Safety

Criteria		Score (1–10)	Comments
22	Cleanliness at registers and throughout the nursery		
23	Identification and minimisation of hazards for staff and customers		
24	Proper storage and organisation of garden care products/tools		
25	Adequate checkout and point-of-sale systems for efficient transactions.		
26	Onsite prioritisation of WHS measures, including first aid resources		

### Category: Product

Criteria		Score (1-10)	Comments
27	Range and variety of plants to meet customer needs including rare and unusual plant offerings		
28	High-quality plant health, appearance, and care in terms of: Disease, pest and weed free Not pot bound Good root health Not over or underwatered Vigour and uniformity Appearance (leaf, flower, fruit)		
29	Clear and informative plant signage including growing conditions and plant care		
30	Availability of quality potting mixes, composts, mulches, pest control and fertilisers.		
31	Well-stocked inventory of tools, watering equipment, and sundries		
32	Selection of garden decor items such as pots, containers, water features, and garden art.		
33	Environmentally friendly pest control and plant care alternatives (organic options)		
34	Garden decor selection (pots, containers, art)		
35	Additional services (cafe, florist, garden maintenance, landscape yard)		

### Category: Customer Service

Criteria		Score (1-10)	Comments
36	Helpful and accurate information provided to customers. Staff should proactively engage with customers to get their specific background/needs/preferences		

Criteria		Score (1-10)	Comments
37	Availability of trolleys, baskets, umbrellas, wheelchair access etc.		
38	Clean and adequate toilet facilities		
39	Gift vouchers, gift wrapping, delivery services		
40	Well-presented and professional staff in terms of appearance, uniform, and name badges		
41	Knowledgeable, friendly staff engaging with customers		

### Category: Merchandising

Criteria		Score (1-10)	Comments
42	Implementation of effective merchandising principles to optimise product location and presentation.		
43	Clear directional and category signage including: Plant Type (Native, Succulent etc) Category Theme (Drought Tolerant, Cold Climate, Salt Tolerant)		
44	Adequately stocked fixtures and benches to ensure availability of products.		
45	Proper labelling and facing up/forward of plants and products.		
46	Cross-merchandising opportunities to enhance sales.		
47	Use of technology (digital displays, QR code to product information)		

### Subtotal

Section	Maximum Possible Score	Final Score
Marketing	70	
Management & Business Practices	60	
Premises & Facilities	50	
Layout and Accessibility	30	
Housekeeping and Safety	50	
Product	90	

Section	Maximum Possible Score	Final Score
Customer Service	60	
Merchandising	60	
Overall Subtotal	470	

## STAGE 3 – Mystery Shopping (Finalists Only)

The mystery shopping stage of our Retail Nursery Award judging provides an unbiased, real-world assessment of each nursery's customer service, staff knowledge, product presentation, and overall shopping experience, ensuring the judging reflects genuine day-to-day performance.

## STAGE 4 – Peer Judging (Finalists Only)

The peer judging stage of our Retail Nursery Award assesses how well nurseries foster respectful, trustworthy supplier relationships, uphold ethical business practices such as timely payments, and provide an overall positive business experience. Peer evaluators score these areas through structured surveys, ensuring the judging process reflects the nursery's reputation and integrity within the industry.

### JUDGES FEEDBACK:

#### Strengths:

#### Areas for Improvement: