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President's Report

by Malcolm Calder, President NGINA

The appointment of Anita Campbell as our new CEO is a significant event for NGINA and provides the foundation for forward momentum and growth. I believe in our team and I have seen the dedication and hard work that has helped us navigate the last six months. Anita will be moving among you over the next few months and is keen to understand your needs and field great suggestions on how NGINA can serve you better.

As I have said before, this is the moment and the season for us to lift awareness of our fine industry nationwide.

Our production nursery members are, on the whole, seeing unprecedented stock volumes being despatched. One NGINA member has seen stock turn at four times the normal July figures. He has recently purchased potting machine automation that has enabled faster and more consistent growing outcomes. He sees no let-up in demand any time soon. The only problem Transplant Systems has, as a supplier of automation, is getting machines produced in Europe and delivered and installed here in a timely fashion as demand has increased.

Our retail garden centre members have reset their premises into COVID-safe environments and have experienced a

variety of challenges, so I wanted to draw relevant and specific comments from them.

NGINA board member, Nichole Roberts from Wyee Nursery says, "Customers are visiting and buying plants for their homes as they have more time to create their indoor and outdoor spaces."

Lisa, also from Wyee Nursery says, "The key words we are hearing are, 'garden makeovers', people want to make their backyard look welcoming and comfortable, and this includes plants and outdoor furniture. Fruit and feature trees have also been a favourite with people."

Nichole continues, "This is a new season for garden centres as they can recreate their space and adapt to meet the needs of customers in this new era that we live in. We are seeing people visiting us just to be in our environment for their wellbeing enjoying the greenspace."

Evan Mueller, CEO of Independent Garden Centres (IGC) says, "There is a frenzy right now to stock up for spring. Comments from IGC members are varied. The most common has been to firm up pre-orders, particularly for greenlife, as certain categories are already becoming scarce,

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An official comment also from Bunnings:

Independent research, commissioned by Bunnings, has revealed that 65% of Australians have at least one unfinished DIY job to do at home, while two in three (64%) are tackling a DIY job once a month with general gardening, decluttering, painting and landscaping topping the list of activities planned.

When it comes to gardening, Bunnings research also uncovered two in five Australians are planning to optimise their gardens.

“We’re hearing from customers that DIY projects provide a useful physical and mental distraction, especially when spending extended periods of time at home,” said Alex Newman, Bunnings National Greenlife Buyer

“In recent months we’ve seen an increase in popularity across all plant types with customers tackling everything from growing their own herbs and vegetables to updating their garden landscapes, as well as adding greenery inside their homes with indoor plants,” Alex continued.

“On behalf of Bunnings, I would like to thank all our growers for their support during this unprecedented time to help us keep up with consumer demand for plants,” Alex concluded.

Research source: Independent research conducted by Honeycomb Strategy on behalf of Bunnings Warehouse, interviewing a nationally representative sample of 1,027 Australians (April 2020).



and many retailers are taking undersized spring stock now. This is clearly causing concern among retailers that there will be a large gap in supply for the spring months. This is forcing retailers to consider lesser known, less-in-demand, non-bread-and-butter plant varieties that wouldn’t usually make the retail order lists. This could prove to be a healthy break for retailers who are forced to stock their stores with plant varieties that aren’t necessarily their usual choice, or what usually “works” in their areas. I anticipate this will push their merchandising and marketing staff to go that extra mile to showcase these plants in eye-catching displays and in-store signage, and I suspect this will also cause sales staff to prove their abilities in both upselling and cross-selling with varieties that they’re not familiar with.”

Interesting comments also come from Dwayne Toll at Heritage Garden Centre, “We have an incredible team that worked together through these months of COVID-19 impact. The critical aspect here was inventory management, that is, stock in the pipeline to replenish. Staff were working hard on lines that we know would be needed. Together we still had our routine and that was a strong foundation for us to manage our way through.”

Dwayne continues, “The business has its challenges managing the COVID surge, including managing family as well. Customer flow has given us good insights. It’s been good to see people getting back to organic and natural ways of growing. There is an authenticity in touch and feel of

greenlife, and this is driving sales as people green-up their homes and gardens.”

Finally I agree with Evan when he says, “Now is the time for garden centres to ramp up their competitive advantage in the way they go to market by leveraging their expertise, the quality plants and products that they sell, and their personal customer service.”

It’s encouraging that the nursery and garden industry has flourished in these challenging times, long may it continue as our people find innovative/outside-the-box ways of keeping customers interested in their new-found passion.





CEO's Report

by Anita Campbell, CEO NGINA

Welcome to the winter edition of *N&G News* and my first CEO report.

As I embark on my new role, I am excited for everything we can achieve together at NGINA. I come to you with over 15 years' management experience in various membership-based industry associations, including Caravan & Camping Industry Association, Housing Industry Association and most recently at the National Fire Industry Association. In all positions I developed a comprehensive member services program and delivered systemic advocacy for members at both national and state levels.

There is no doubt that the nursery and garden industry is strong and resilient. You weathered a drought and harsh water restrictions admirably before living through some of the worst bushfires that Australia has ever seen. And then, none of us could have foreseen the next great threat, COVID-19, which is now a term that will be synonymous with the year 2020. The global pandemic has killed hundreds of thousands of people, infected millions and the economic fallout will be felt for years to come.

But, even through drought, bushfires, floods and a global pandemic, the nursery and garden industry has persevered and come out victorious. Thanks to the lobbying efforts of NGINA and because of the compliance of all members with strict social distancing measures, the nursery industry has been considered an essential service and has continued to operate.

And it's a good thing too—we have never in history seen a growth in gardening as we have seen during COVID-19. I know our members have been excited to provide quality products and to share expert advice with both new and existing customers.

As I start to move around I have been overwhelmed with offers of support and help from all sectors of the industry and from among our member base, which goes to show how unified and connected the industry is. I saw it first-hand at our Trade Day last month where everyone was so pleased to be seeing each other again. I have already met so many hard-working business

owners who are completely committed to improving the competitiveness, profitability and sustainability of the industry.

The challenge moving forward will be to continue to engage with the new gardeners, to continue to offer our members in bushfire-affected areas our full support, continue lobbying the government for stimulus measures to kickstart the Australian economy, overcome stock shortages and continue to be vigilant with all social distancing restrictions to ensure that we curb a second wave.

I am looking forward to getting to know the organisation and getting to know all our members. A key goal of the association is to identify and deliver on member needs with a range of services to provide value and necessity to be involved. I have therefore started coming around visiting members to learn about their businesses, ask questions and listen to all their suggestions for improvement. I had the opportunity to meet our stand holders and buyer visitors at Trade Day, and hear first-hand how well the industry has fared during the pandemic. I have also met with some of our regional and special interest groups, and representatives from Greenlife Industry Australia, Independent Garden Centres and Business Australia (formerly NSW Business Chamber).

I am keen to hear everyone's opinions on what products and services NGINA should be offering. To that end we have sent out a comprehensive member engagement survey (sent out in a member comms email on Thursday 30 July and again in eNews on Tuesday 4 August) and I strongly encourage everyone to complete that as soon as possible.

NGINA has a critical role to play in the conversations and policy decisions impacting the nursery and garden industry in NSW and ACT. I will also be establishing contact points with all external stakeholders to foster effective and productive working relationships through mutual interests around growth, investment, biosecurity and environmental responsibility.

I am looking forward to working with a very active Board and a very capable support team to continue to deliver a broader range of benefits and services for our members.



We're Having the Best and Longest Spring... EVER!

by Craig Perring, Business & Technical Support Officer, NGINA

Spring—"the spring we never had", "it's like an early spring", "spring on steroids" or "the busiest I have ever seen it in all my years in the industry"—seems to have continued through the autumn and into winter months. Speaking to both retailers and wholesalers these are the phrases I have been hearing since April.

Yes, trade has slowed down since the autumn onslaught, thanks to COVID-19, but there is, generally, reasonably strong sales or demand for plants given it's the middle of winter. Our July Trade Day had lots of happy stand holders who had

strong orders leading up to Trade Day, and many growers sold out all their "on spec" plants on the day, which resulted in a good and upbeat vibe in what was our first proper Trade Day in three months.

Having said this, concerns are creeping in for spring stock supplies. We understand that many retailers are concerned about stock availability leading into spring and many growers are somewhat anxious about being able to meet the demand of supplying quality, fully grown stock.

We encourage people who have good stock supplies to let NGINA know so we can share it among our members or, alternatively, if you are looking for something specific please let us know and we may be able to help you source it.

Without wanting to keep it in the news any more than it needs to be, we need to remain vigilant about COVID-19. Recent outbreaks in Melbourne and Sydney have highlighted how vulnerable we can be to the virus and how it can affect our businesses, with border closures, lockdowns, staffing issues and more.

NGINA has proactively re-established its COVID Crisis Committee (CCC) in anticipation of any further outbreaks within NSW to ensure, like last time, NGINA can provide members with the best information and legislation changes as they comes to hand.

CCC member Craig Williams from Garden City Plastics has confidently reassured us that the amount of pots being manufactured has already been increased and there is currently very little concern about pot supply in any state being affected in the case of any further outbreaks.

It is a timely reminder for our members to be vigilant, particularly our public-facing retail members. It is worth reviewing your operations and COVID-19 policies and plans, and enforcing them with staff and visitors to your sites.

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- Encourage staff to stay home and get tested if showing any signs of fever, coughing, shortness of breath or sore throat. Staff must not return to work until they have received a negative test result
- Ensure adequate signage is in place highlighting:
 - ▶ social distancing rules
 - ▶ limits of people allowed on your premises at any one time
 - ▶ good hygiene
 - ▶ walking traffic flow plans
- Establish hand sanitising stations around your business and enforce customers and staff to use them
- Encourage contactless payments
- Install screens around checkouts
- All personnel to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) where appropriate
- Regular checking of the Government's Department of Health website (health.gov.au) for official updates to

legislation and policy change

- Although not compulsory, keep a register of all people that come in and out of your nursery (where possible)—if you have a café within the nursery this is compulsory
- Check your emails regularly for NGINA up-to-date industry updates
- Join NGINA's community page on Facebook. Search for 'Nursery & Garden Industry (NSW & ACT) Community', ask to join and answer the three simple questions

I am actively on the road again visiting nurseries after the COVID-19 hiatus, so expect a call from me soon if I am yet to officially visit you. Alternatively, if you would like a visit for a specific business or technical support purpose please let me know and I will book in a time to come and see you. The best contact for me is via email (craig.perring@ngina.com.au) or give me a call on 0439 661 368.



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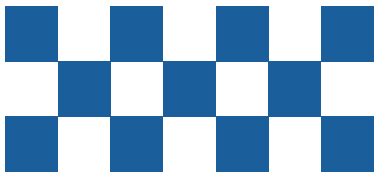
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I'm pleased to introduce myself as one of the new owners of C-Mac Industries, as the team and I look forward to bringing a **fresh approach to delivering** your innovative metal solutions and needs.

Regards, Matt Brown



‘Prohibited Trade of Plants’ Campaign

The prohibited trading of plants and weeds is causing many problems including flooding and erosion, poor water quality, less fish and other water life, less habitat for our native plants and animals, and reduces our opportunities for boating, fishing and swimming.

AIM OF THE CAMPAIGN

Local Land Services (LLS, NSW) and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI, NSW), with support from NGINA, are working with Crime Stoppers to appeal to the wider community to help protect our waterways by stopping online trading and sales of prohibited plants.

Education is a key component of this campaign as the community needs to:

- understands it is illegal to grow and propagate certain invasive plants and water weeds
- have a clear understanding of what is illegal
- be aware of the impact/consequences of illegal online trading and sales of these prohibited plants

Via a campaign that is due to run from August to November, Crime Stoppers will help educate the public on the impacts these prohibited plants can cause and encourage the community to report any illegal sales to Crime Stoppers. A series of images, which will be available to download and share across social media, has been created especially for this campaign, conveying the following messages:



No Space for Weeds

Working together with LLS and DPI, we hope you can assist us in combating and reducing this problem.

MESSAGE 1:

Protect our waterways so you can enjoy boating, fishing and swimming

Some floating water plants are weedy. They grow quickly, block waterways and reduce water quality, ruining life's pleasures like boating, fishing and swimming. That's why trading these plants is illegal and must be stopped. It is prohibited to trade frogbit, salvinia and water hyacinth. If you see, know or suspect something, contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or report online at nsw.crimestoppers.com.au/. We just need to know what you know, not who you are.



MESSAGE 2:

Plants that are illegal to sell

It is an offence to sell salvinia and water hyacinth. These floating water plants put our environment, economy and community at risk. That's why trading these plants is illegal and must be stopped. Penalties of up to \$1.1 million are in place for individuals found to be selling these plants. If you see know or suspect something, contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or report online at nsw.crimestoppers.com.au/. We just need to know what you know, not who you are.



Wallbot — A Bot to Maintain a Green Wall

by Sara Wilkinson, Marc Carmichael and Richardo Khonasty, the Wallbot Team from UTS

WHY WE NEED GREEN WALLBOTS

The United Nations is forecasting a three degrees Celsius global temperature increase by 2100, which will further intensify excessive heat experienced in Australia. In addition, population growth, urban densification, climate change and global warming all contribute to heat waves, all of which are more intense in high-density environments. With urbanisation, vegetation is replaced by impervious materials that contribute to the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. Concurrently, adverse health outcomes and heat related deaths are increasing where the old, young and those with reduced mobility are more severely affected. Heat stress affects labour productivity, with the number of days people can work safely outdoors in Australia set to decline.

The question is, how can we reduce the UHI and ameliorate the accompanying issues? One way is to increase green infrastructure in our cities because green infrastructure:

- attenuates the UHI
- reduces surface temperatures during daytime and air temperature at night
- improves air quality, and
- enhances population health

On buildings, green infrastructure is in the form of green roofs, green walls and green facades, which can be part of the original design or retrofitted. Parks and trees on streets are other urban forms of green infrastructure. In 2014, a UTS Institute of Sustainable Futures report and Macquarie University study showed that in cities six degrees Celsius heat mitigation is possible with good green infrastructure. However, despite these known benefits, uptake of green infrastructure, and particularly green walls, has been slow, the reasons being the:

- costs of ongoing maintenance inspections
- monitoring plant health and
- OH&S issues for maintenance teams

If inspection, monitoring and maintenance functions could be automated by a robot (a Wallbot), this barrier to adoption may not hold in future.

This article describes the design and fabrication of a Green

Wallbot by a transdisciplinary team of UTS researchers from the Schools of Built Environment, Mechatronics and Horticultural Science. The UTS Wallbot project comprises the design and fabrication of a prototype bot to monitor and maintain green walls. Working with Transport for NSW and the green wall and roof company, Junglefy, two design workshops held in 2019 determined the design criteria for the Wallbot, which was fabricated and tested in a UTS robotics lab in 2020, with further field (or wall) trials planned for late 2020 and 2021.

WHY WE NEED GREEN WALLS

Many refer to the climate ‘emergency’, as the mounting evidence of climate change makes denial no longer tenable. The Australian summer of 2020 comprised unprecedented intensity in bushfires, followed by hailstorms, intense rainfall and flooding along the east coast. The predictions are for increases in temperatures for some years, even if extreme mitigation actions are taken.

Another factor is population growth. The built environment will expand its total footprint by 100% by 2060 to accommodate the human population. Currently most growth comprises high density buildings typically requiring air conditioning. Lightweight external envelopes minimise loadings on structural forms and foundations, which historically, have not performed well thermally. The result being that more heat is expelled from these buildings into the surrounding areas.

With increased temperatures and a growing aged population, health and heat stress issues mount. The elderly and the young are the most affected groups and, if our built form does not change, we can expect more adverse, acute health issues. These events strain health services and the economy; both of which are exceptionally stressed by COVID-19 at the time of writing.

There is a spike in temperature in city centres, known as the UHI effect. This increase is caused by heat being reflected from materials, such as concrete, used in built forms and being expelled from air conditioning systems, typically into narrow streets, where heat can be trapped below tree canopies exacerbating the problem.

Nearly 70 years ago, Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring*, a

book highlighting the link between contemporary agricultural practices using chemical fertilisers and the devastating impact on nature. The bugs and birds died as a result, hence the silent spring. In high-density built environments, we often fail to provide habitats for biodiversity, for the bugs and the birds. These creatures, which pollinate plants, are essential for life on earth. Further, with the changing climate, many species need to migrate to new areas to survive and a green infrastructure is needed to facilitate that migration.

Plants photosynthesise, absorbing carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen. As such, they attenuate some pollutants emitted from buildings and vehicles, improving the air quality. With high-density built forms covering large areas, air flow can be impaired and having green walls improves air quality.

Finally, humans have an innate need to experience the natural world and spending time in natural environments we experience well-being labelled, biophilia. These feelings enhance calmness and reduce anxiety. All issues above can be addressed through increasing green infrastructure. Table 1 summarises the issues and ways green walls can mitigate adverse impacts and improve the environment.

WALLBOT DESIGN

Before designing the Wallbot the requirements and constraints associated with automating green wall maintenance had to be understood. After a comprehensive review of related existing technologies, two key stakeholders workshops were hosted, which included green wall installers and designers, indigenous Elders, landscape architects, building certifiers, urban planners, policy makers, construction companies, property developers, robot designers, IoT professionals and horticultural scientists.

The workshops considered potential Wallbot features and functions and the social, economic, environmental, regulatory, legal and technological factors impacting design. The key technical considerations were:

- a) how to facilitate motion across the side of buildings and
- b) how maintenance, such as planting, pruning, waste collection and plant health monitoring, could be performed.

An outcome of the workshops was the understanding that the form of the system would require different embodiments depending on the type of green wall installation being maintained. For example, a large building with significant green infrastructure requiring frequent maintenance could be best maintained by a permanent installation integrated into the building, with the capital cost offset by savings on maintenance over time. Alternatively, smaller green walls may be better maintained by a system installed temporarily when maintenance is required, allowing costs to be shared across multiple green wall installations. Another discussion point was the capabilities of the Wallbot. A system physically interacting with the plants for operations such as planting and pruning is significantly more complex than a system solely performing non-contact health monitoring. The advantage of this extra complexity again depends on the type of installation.

After the workshops, the Wallbot prototype scope was agreed, with a focus on developing a system that can be transported site to site, and with plant health monitoring capabilities. This reduced the complexity of development, while resulting in a design that could be beneficial for stakeholders.

TABLE 1: URBAN ISSUES AND GREEN WALL BENEFITS

Urban Issues	Green Wall Benefits
Climate change	Improves thermal performance of buildings reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
Urban heat island (UHI)	Widespread uptake reduces energy loads and amount of hot air discharged from buildings.
Population growth	Improved thermal performance and attenuation of UHI will enable us to accommodate more people comfortably in cities.
Health and aging populations	Attenuation of UHI mitigates heat stress for young and aged populations.
Biodiversity habitat	Habitat is provided for species which ensure pollination of plants.
Air quality	Absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen.
Biophilia	Provide opportunity for people to experience wellbeing.

THE GREEN WALLBOT

For the prototype, a concept utilising actuated ropes to manoeuvre the Wallbot's body across the green wall was chosen. This concept aligns with the Wallbot being a system that is transported and installed on site. Using four computer-controlled winches operating in unison to control the length and tension of the ropes, the Wallbot is moved across the green wall to perform plant inspection. For measuring plant health, the Wallbot body is fitted with three vision-based sensors. An optical tracking camera

(Intel RealSense T265) tracks the motions of the Wallbot body as it manoeuvres across the wall. A second camera (Intel RealSense D425) uses stereo infrared sensors to build a 3D map of the scene it detects. Combined, these cameras allow a high-fidelity 3D map of the green wall to be constructed. A third sensor, a multi-spectral survey camera (MAPIR Survey 3), calculates the normalised difference vegetation index (NDVI) of the plants and allows the general health of the green wall to be measured.

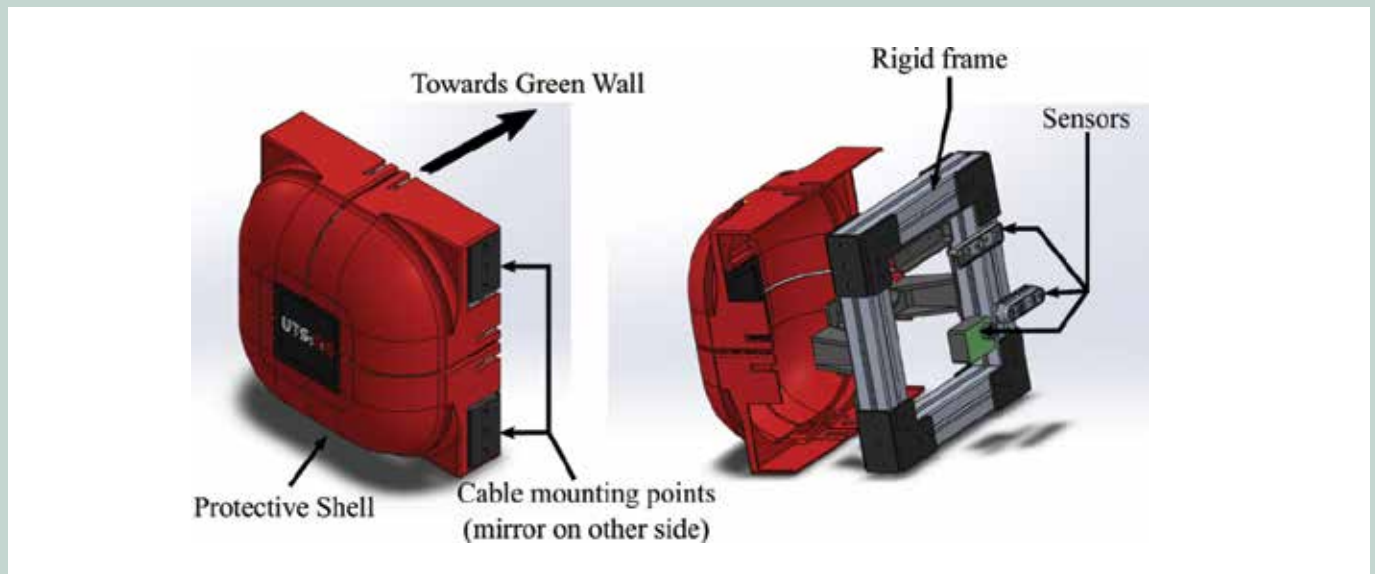


Image 1: Main body of the Wallbot



Image 2: The Wallbot installation at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

Initial tests were performed at UTS on a green wall containing five Junglery planter boxes, four of which were populated with plants (see Image 2). Combining measurements from different Wallbot positions allowed a 3D map of the plants to be generated (see Image 3).

INITIAL FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

Preliminary test results were very encouraging, though more work is needed before the Wallbot can maintain green walls. One challenge has been the use of relatively low-cost, off-the-shelf hardware to create the prototype. Future

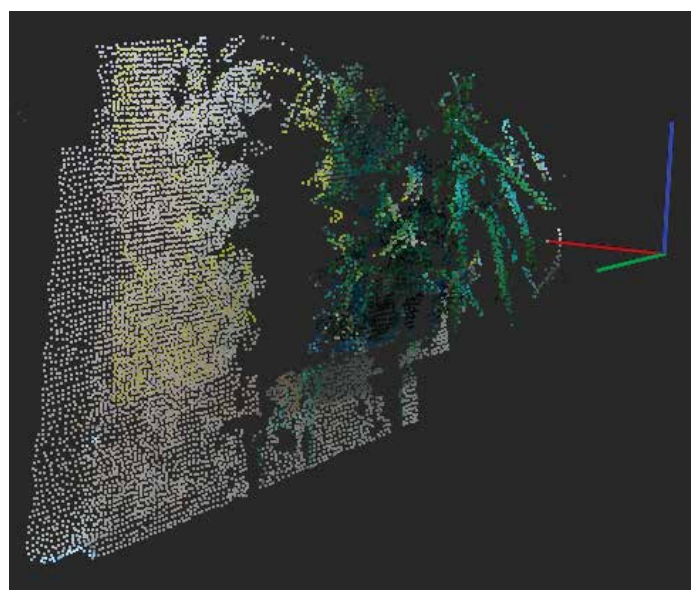


Image 3: Reconstruction of the vertical garden by the Wallbot

development will explore more suitable, probably custom-made components better suited to the application.

Despite the challenges, the Wallbot prototype has successfully created a 3D map of the green wall to assist regular inspections. Once the system is installed plants can be monitored automatically and regularly without need for manual inspections. Maintenance, such as pruning, still requires human intervention, and a proposed solution is to combine regular Wallbot systematic monitoring of green walls, with people performing targeted maintenance tasks. This paradigm reduces requirements for human maintenance, WH&S risk and human maintenance costs. Additionally, with regular systematic inspection the demise of plants could be detected early and potentially remedied if corrective action can be performed in time.

Future versions of the Wallbot are planned with additional sensors for collecting temperature, humidity, wind and soil moisture data, providing maintenance teams with rich information about the health of green walls. Additionally, attachments to allow pruning or spraying nutrients may be


added. We are also developing the concept of the Smart Green Wall and Smart Green Roof, whereby sensors and controls are linked to the building management systems within buildings. There are, of course, further applications for such technologies in food producing and nursery environments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Be ‘Plastic Smart’ Like Our Greenlife Growers

In any story there are inconsistencies!

The problem with plastic is that it is all lumped together into one and given a negative connotation. But what if the story wasn't like that? Most of the bad press is simply what the mainstream media has used to push a narrative that suits them. Plastic is not simply going to disappear, but it can definitely be handled correctly.

“Greenlife industries, Australia wide, are today already keeping over 10 million kilograms per year of one particular plastic out of landfill through recycling.”

What if there is a group of people and companies who are already doing the right thing? Who are trying to improve the way that we use plastic and how we recycle. Who can actually take waste and turn it back into a product again.

In an age where we're striving for social equality, it must be said that plastics don't fit the mould. However, did you realise that greenlife industries, Australia wide, are today already keeping over 10 million kilograms per year of one particular plastic out of landfill through recycling?

Not all plastics are equal. They are not all the same and they should be treated differently. A supermarket bag is very different to a tag or a plant pot.

We can reduce the waste sent to landfill. We can stop importing more bio-products and actually use what we already have at our disposal. In treating plastic as generic, we are wasting opportunities. We need to treat it by code.

The fact is plastics already exist. They are already here in everyday items. We have spent energy making them and

turning them into products. How we dispose of them in order to reuse them is the real issue.

It makes perfect sense then, that we take something that already exists and turn it into a product so it can be used again. And again. And again. And that really is our ultimate goal. To create Australian made, Australian bought and Australian consumed closed-loop packaging.

Garden City Plastics, Norwood, Polymer Processors, Astron Sustainability and the Australian Packaging Convent Organisation are banding together with Australian horticulture to be 'plastic smart'.

Being 'plastic smart' means using the polypropylene products already in existence in this positive way. The horticultural industry has done this for a long period of time and wants to improve on this even more. Pots, stakes and tags are all polypropylene plastic (PP5).

“Our ultimate goal is to create Australian made, Australian bought and Australian consumed closed-loop packaging.”

All that is required is some awareness, co-operation and personal responsibility taken by all of us as consumers to 'do the right thing'.

The 'plastic smart' program begins with simple solutions.

The biggest issue facing recyclers is sorting.

But if all the PP5 goes in the same bin we have instantly removed the biggest hurdle.

In order to achieve closed-loop recycling of PP5 in Australian horticulture, our goal is to place collection bins in garden

centres and recycling locations across the country. From retailers that have already committed, to those that currently sit on the fence, we hope to have a national program in place to collect, recycle and reuse all of the PP5 in horticultural circulation.

Within the next 12 months, we will have a website up and running outlining the bin locations and providing up-to-date information on the volumes collected and recycled, so consumers of greenlife industries across Australia can see this is not just talk. When you do things right you can make a

big difference by making a small change. So that nothing goes to waste.

Garden City Plastics, Norwood, Polymer Processors and Astron Sustainability are all excited by the opportunity to take more responsibility for what we do. To be a part of this great initiative. To work side by side together on something as organisations. Not because it is good business. But because it is the right thing to do. For you, for us and for the prevention of unnecessary landfill.

Property Identification System for the Nursery and Garden Industry

Australia's state and territory governments are considering options for implementing a nationally harmonised property identification system across our animal and plant industries, including properties engaged in the production and sale of plants.

NGINA's Business & Technical Support Officer, Craig Perring, has been working with NSW DPI and is excited to be involved in the project. He says, "Property identification systems can be used to support you and your business during times of emergency. A great example has been during the recent bushfires, where many nurseries were adversely affected. The opportunities to provide assistance or prioritise deployment of resources, could be expedited if we knew exactly where all nurseries were located, particularly in regional areas."

Craig continues, "The other significant benefit I see for industry is helping to reduce biosecurity risks by enabling the tracing of plant movements from property of origin through the supply chain to the consumer. If you look at outbreaks of citrus canker, myrtle rust, fire ants and current threats to our industry, such as fall armyworm, the importance of being able to trace back to the source of infection/outbreak is paramount."

Dianna Watkins, NSW DPI, Director Strategic Projects, has been working on the project for a while with the objective of identifying the simplest and most cost-effective way to implement the initiative without being a burden to growers.

"There is basic traceability for some plant industry products, however, the current systems are not underpinned by a common property identifier. We are seeking industry assistance to get a better understanding of what the nursery and garden industry participants know and think about property identification systems, and how they can support and improve our emergency response capabilities, biosecurity management and enhance market access for NSW products."

"We are asking NGINA members and other industry stakeholders to work with us to help build a property identification system that meets the needs of industry and government. We have prepared some survey questions for NGINA members so we can get a better understanding of how a property identification system could complement the nursery and garden industry," she concluded.

To complete the survey, please type the following link into your browser: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V2CTS9P>.

(Note: the survey closes on 31 August 2020.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT:



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e: craig.perring@ngina.com.au



Dianna Watkins, NSW DPI
Director Strategic Projects
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“No Space for Weeds” — Councils and Nurseries Working Together to Tackle Biosecurity

Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) has been serving the community since 1948 with a single purpose in mind: to administer the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 throughout the council areas of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Penrith and The Hills Shire.

Recently appointed Biosecurity Weeds Coordinator, Philip Price, has over six years' experience in the environmental and biosecurity industries, as well as having a passion for Cumberland Plain Woodland and native bees.

The HRCC Biosecurity Team has been out and about visiting and inspecting plant nurseries, and can happily report that no priority weeds were found at any of the registered plant nurseries inspected.

“The inspections are part of the HRCC Nursery Program and show a commitment to the wider NSW Sydney Weeds Action Program to survey high-risk sites such as plant points of sale, for example, nurseries. The inspections are seasonal and will occur twice a year at the beginning of winter and spring,” Phil said.

The HRCC Nursery Program aims to develop nursery industry staff to promote environmentally safe plants and avoid those that pose a biosecurity risk to our region. The program also incorporates education to retailers and wholesalers, while seeking to increase awareness of priority weed issues in our region. The representatives at HRCC provide support foremost.

HRCC has a targeted priority weeds list, which lists those weeds that pose a biosecurity risk if they are sold. Nursery

staff are guided through the inspection process and what priority weeds inspectors are looking out for.

Phil continues, “Most priority weeds are not sold by registered dealers or nurseries per se, instead they’re sold by what are best described as “backyard operations”. Our team has seized restricted plants such as frogbit (*Limnobium laevigatum*), Opuntia species and water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) from some of these operations. These plants can have devastating effects if released into the environment, not to mention the billions of dollars it costs to control them.”

Kenthurst Nursery General Manager, Marc Patterson, has been involved in the inspection process and was grateful for the opportunity to have a biosecurity officer cast his eye over Kenthurst Nursery.

“It was great to see Phil come out to the nursery and inspect our site. With continued support from NGINA and registered nurseries in our region we will feel more confident that HRCC can identify priority weeds and prevent them from escaping into our bushland and waterways. As businesses, and the community at large, we all need to control invasive weeds to prevent any future bio-security risks that could potentially harm our industry,” said Marc.

Phil concluded, “I’ve been impressed with the plant nursery industry and do not doubt that with NGINA’s support we will continue to combat priority weeds from posing a biosecurity risk.”

HRCC and NGINA would like community support to report occurrences of priority weeds being sold to the public.



Bunny Ears cactus (*Opuntia microdasys*)
Source: The Green Area blog (greenarea.com)



Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*)
Source: NSW DPI



Frogbit – *Limnobium laevigatum*
Source: NSW DPI



Please report any suspected sales
to Phil at weeds@hrcc.nsw.gov.au.

For more information on HRCC, visit their website
at hrcc.nsw.gov.au or find them on Facebook by
searching for Hawkesbury River County Council.



Marc Patterson (General Manager, Kenthurst Nursery) and Phil Price
(Biosecurity Weeds Coordinator at Hawkesbury River County Council)



Kenthurst Nursery aerial view



Kenthurst Nursery aerial view

ADVERTISE HERE

If you're reading this, so are
your potential customers

If you want to advertise in **N&G News**, call the office
on (02) 9679 1472 or email info@ngina.com.au



Leading the Way in Organics



Long before organics became trendy and people worried about chemicals in their food and neonicotinoids in bee pollen, Organic Crop Protectants (OCP) was busy developing safe organic options for the horticulture sector.

OCP was founded in 1991 by Leyland Minter and Dr Doreen Clark (AM). Leyland had a background in horticulture and agriculture and was looking for ways to develop more eco-friendly products. He knew Doreen through her chemical testing and analysis business and felt that with her organic chemistry background they'd make a great team.

The first product was Synertril and represented a significant new offering to farmers and growers as a 100% botanical oil adjuvant that improved spray efficacy and reduced drift. Not long after, Gary Leeson joined the team and together they grew the OCP portfolio to now include:

- Botanical and biological insecticides
- Fungicides
- Herbicides
- Soil improvers
- Biostimulants
- Speciality foliar nutrients and fertilisers

- Biological agents (beneficial bacteria, fungi and viruses)
- Traps and monitoring devices

It's important to note that this broad range is backed up by their efficacy and organic credibility. The bulk of the products are approved for use in organic gardens and farms (through Australian Certified Organic) and APVMA registered (where required). Products are available in large sizes for commercial growers or small packs for retailers and home gardeners.

OCP is a science-led business and works closely with universities, government departments and other researchers to help develop innovative organic solutions. Some of these include:

ECO-OIL

Initially eco-oil involved two years' work with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to register Australia's first plant-based horticultural oil. This was followed up with six years of research with Charles Sturt University and Washington State University to create a double-action insecticide that controls pests while actively attracting beneficial insects into crops and gardens.

ECO-FUNGICIDE AND ECOCARB

These required four years of work with South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) looking for ways to control powdery mildew and other diseases. More recent work has seen an improvement to the formulation enabling a much broader range of organic disease control.

SLASHER ORGANIC WEEDKILLER

Launched in 2016, Slasher represented the culmination of 10 years' research and development. It has twice won 'Organic Product of Year' and is arguably the best plant-based herbicide on the market, delivering visible results within one hour on most weeds and with no lasting residue in soils.

METCALF TRICHODERMA RANGE

OCP supported the work of Dr Dean Metcalf to isolate and then manufacture a range of beneficial Trichoderma fungi in Australia that protects crops against common pathogens like phytophthora and botrytis.

Not content to rest on their laurels OCP is working on some exciting projects including an organic nematicide, new fruit fly control methods, as well as pheromone isolation of fruit spotting bugs and trap development.

OCP has always aimed to be at the leading edge of innovation in organic farming and gardening. To that end in 2018 OCP joined with DuluxGroup which is one of Australia's largest investors in research and development in the bio-horticultural and organic gardening space. OCP has since been able to draw on those resources for new product



Gary Leeson celebrating Slasher Weedkiller winning ACO's Organic Product of the Year

development and to improve existing commercial products.

As you can see from humble beginnings OCP has grown into the leading provider of organic products to the horticultural industry and can truly be called the organic experts! Their core markets are Australia and New Zealand but word has spread further afield with customers to be found in Korea, the UK, Singapore, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Taiwan and elsewhere.

If you'd like to learn more about OCP products please visit ocp.com.au (commercial range) or ecoorganicgarden.com.au (home gardener range).



Jason Vella, OCP QLD State Manager with Christian Hubener, Acadian Seaplants' Technical Consultant, discuss the benefits of Acadian seaplant extract while inspecting the vines at Romeo's Best with Paul Fouche and Ulrich Coetzer



Seen This Plant? Parthenium Weed

As of mid-July this year, Parthenium weed (*Parthenium hysterophorus*) has been detected on 21 infested premises as new incursions across NSW. This is the highest number of outbreaks since 1999 and the first year that the weed has been recorded east of the Great Dividing Range.

A significant biosecurity risk to the environment, economy and community, Parthenium weed is prohibited in NSW under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015.

HOW DOES THIS WEED AFFECT US?

Parthenium weed can cause severe dermatitis and respiratory problems in humans.

It invades pastures and crops, and can also cause health problems in horses and cattle, and to a lesser extent sheep, goats and dogs.

It out-competes other plants by competing for nutrients and moisture, and by releasing chemicals into the soil that inhibit growth.

Parthenium weed:

- is a host plant for crop viruses such as Tobacco Streak Virus
- is toxic to livestock
- outcompetes pastures
- can taint the flavour of meat or milk
- reduces crop yields
- contaminates grain

NSW has successfully eradicated all known incursions of Parthenium weed since it was first detected in the state in 1982. Timely detection relies on the vigilance and support of the community



Source NSW WeedWise



Source NSW WeedWise

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Leaves are:

- pale green
- lower leaves are 5–20 cm long and deeply divided
- upper leaves less divided and smaller
- covered with soft, fine hair
- alternate on the stem

Most leaves die after the plant flowers.

Flowers are:

- creamy-white
- 4–6 mm in diameter
- at the tips of the stems
- made up of clusters of tiny florets in the centre
- star-like with five distinct 'points' (each point has a tiny petal)
- in clusters that look a bit like a 'baby's breath'

The flowering window for Parthenium weed is closing and senescing plants may be unrecognisable as a result of the cold weather. (However, Parthenium plants found at the end of June on the Central Coast were still in full flower and growing despite minor frosts.)

WHAT TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT DOES IT GROW IN?

Parthenium weed tolerates a variety of conditions and soil types.

It grows best in areas with:

- alkaline clay-loam to heavy black clay soils
- at least 500 mm of summer rain
- disturbed, degraded or bare soil sites

WHERE CAN YOU LOOK FOR IT?

- livestock (including poultry) have been fed grain or hay, particularly if it has come from Queensland
- earthworks have taken place, particularly if machinery has been in Queensland
- there is bare soil (cultivated areas, roadsides, poor pastures)
- grain crops have been harvested by a contractor

Once established, plants will survive droughts and frosts. It will not grow in very arid or wet areas.

For further information about Parthenium weed please visit: weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/PartheniumWeed

If you see this weed, please call the NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline on 1800 680 244.



Parthenium weed found 2020

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Cumborah April 1 | 12. Tamworth May 7 |
| 2. Forbes April 7 | 13. Boggabri May 6 |
| 3. Engadine April 16 | 14. Kamilaroi Hwy May 12 |
| 4. Goolhi April 24 | 15. Gunningbland May 18 |
| 5. Muswellbrook April 24 | 16. Parkes May 29 |
| 6. Wee Waa April 23 | 17. Inverell June 4 |
| 7. Merah North April 27 | 18. Boggabri June 9 |
| 8. Gunnedah April 29 | 19. Warrah June 9 |
| 9. Burren Junction April 30 | 20. Ravensdale June 21 |
| 10. Blandford May 4 | 21. Nambucca Valley July 13 |
| 11. Bendemeer May 6 | |



Industry Stalwart in Capable New Hands



From the humble beginnings when Cliff McMaster started working on exhaust manifolds in a garage back in 1962, C-Mac Industries has morphed into one of the nursery industry's most valued allied trade suppliers.

In May this year, the McMaster family was proud to see C-Mac Industries sold to the Brown family. The Browns have been involved in the nursery sector, specialising in greenhouses and quarantine facilities. New owner Matthew Brown is excited to be offering further services to the nursery sector.

Matt says, "C-Mac has been around for over 50 years and has supported the advancement of the nursery sector with the production of the COMET potting machine. The team at C-Mac looks forward to the challenge of bringing a fresh approach to delivering innovative nursery solutions to meet the needs of the nursery industry, and plans on developing existing processes to exceed our customers' expectations."

C-Mac is proudly Australian made and owned, and Matt continues, "We are passionate about what we do and with our experience in the nursery sector we will ensure our customers get their orders on time and fit-for-purpose."

NGINA has recently welcomed C-Mac as an industry partner and believes, together with their other businesses (including

concrete and greenhouse expertise), C-Mac is a great fit to be working and supporting the industry with equipment from benching solutions to steam sterilising systems.

NGINA's Business & Technical Support Officer (BTSO) Craig Perring met with Matt Brown soon after acquiring C-Mac and was impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication Matt and his team are committing to the Association and the nursery sector.

"Matt showed his passion and enthusiasm for the industry the day we met. He was already out visiting nurseries on day two of the job offering upgrades to potting machines and discussing how we can work together to drive efficiencies forward for our members and other industry stakeholders. Clearly a company committed to the industry and is looking to keep the Australian made quality in house, which is great to hear. I get to visit many nurseries in NSW and ACT, and a lot of them have a C-Mac manufactured tool or solution in their potting sheds! We look forward to working with Matt and encourage growers to reach out to him for their potting solutions," Craig said.

C-Mac is still locally based in NSW and is continuing to work out of their Girraween offices.



COMET Potting Machine

For more information please contact:

Matt Brown

Owner, C-Mac Industries

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e: matt@cmac.com.au

w: cmac.com.au

Craig Perring

NGINA BTSO

m: 0439 661 368

e: craig.perring@ngina.com.au



Ezi Bagger

Knowledge is Power

by Matt Mills (National Sales & Marketing Manager, GCP)
and Elliott Akintola (Horticultural Agronomist & Sales, GCP)

Garden City Plastics (GCP) is making a concerted investment effort to build and enhance the knowledge and skills of its workforce. The good news is that this knowledge is being passed on to their customers, horticulture businesses and informing the industry.

“At GCP we highly value the ongoing relationships we have with our customers and therefore we believe that one of the best ways we can demonstrate commitment to those relationships, is to offer support to help your business. Through our ongoing trade with you, we are determined to help horticulture businesses grow and further thrive over time.

In recent seasons, we are very proud to have added a talented Agronomy Team to our ranks. Elliott Akintola and Dr Reyhaneh Pordel have been providing a range of fully qualified agronomic services (at no charge) to growers Australia wide for over 18 months now. During this time, our team has solved many problems from micro-nutrient deficiencies to specialised IPM outcomes for open air nurseries and protected cropping growers.

This period has also seen GCP draw on the professional qualifications of both our agronomists to extend and strengthen the horticultural knowledge of our teams of customer service and field sales staff. The extended specialist qualifications that Elliott has now added to his abilities, are a perfect example of GCP’s dedication to enrich our people and offer growers access to better and better expertise and knowledge as we maintain our dedication to being your solution-driven trusted partners in horticulture.” Matt Mills, National Sales and Marketing Manager at GCP

Here’s Elliott to share his experiences of working at GCP, the additional training he’s undertaken and how it’s benefiting so many in the industry.

“We exist in a dynamic world; an ever-evolving world where change remains deeply pervasive. Andy Warhol said, “They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.” This concept of change permeates every phase of our collective existence, career, business and industry. The key to avoiding the risk of going completely extinct is to prepare, understand and evolve. However, the evolution of a species can mean the extinction or depletion of another.

The desire for change and evolution manifests itself in our industry through an increase in competition for scarce resources such as land, water and minerals. Although competition is necessary for change, it is also necessary that such competition is managed properly. Inherently, controlled-environment agriculture (CEA) and protected cropping plays a fundamental role in such management.

A protected cropping system is an enclosed environment that optimises temperature, light, water and carbon dioxide to maximise plant production. This system of plant production focuses on efficiently optimising the quantity and quality of crop production while reducing and recycling the resources to improve agricultural sustainability. Controlled environments can significantly reduce reliance on inputs (fertiliser, pesticide, energy and water) and reduce environmental impacts such as chemical runoff, waterway nitrification, post-harvest losses and crop waste, carbon dioxide emissions and greatly reduce ‘food miles’.

The field of protected cropping integrates technologies across disciplines (e.g., horticulture, plant nutrition, physiology and breeding, entomology, environmental and material sciences; mechanical engineering and design; robotics and computer programming) and has become the global standard towards creating a sustainable earth and industry.





Elliott Akintola



is broad; from in-house agronomists, sales and business management experts to product managers on substrates and propagation, engineers, mold designers, etc.

The company has also invested in building and increasing staff capacity. Recently, with the full support of GCP, I undertook courses at WSU on protected cropping. This included extensive studies on biosecurity and pollination, plant nutrition, and climate control, and technology in protected cropping houses. The completion of these units added to and expanded my skills significantly. I was exposed to opportunity innovation, computerisation, and up-to-date research information and techniques. My improved capacity brings specialised support to our GCP clientele and to the industry. Combining this course with my qualifications as an agronomist, alongside six years of work experience, improves my position to properly help clients using the best strategy and modern tools. I would highly recommend these WSU courses to anyone in the industry.

As one of the foremost technical supply businesses in Australia, we support our staff to acquire specialised training such as in this first-ever Australian protected cropping studies course at NVPCC. Clearly, GCP understands that with expertise and experience comes efficiency in addressing the needs of customers in the field of protected cropping at high global standards and within the Australian climate and legislative requirements. The integration of academic and professional skills ensures that current and future needs in terms of biosecurity, pollination, climate control and nutrition are met.

It is no exaggeration that horticulture and agriculture remain an essential industry in every economy, however, for the industry to thrive into the future, it must become sustainable as well as efficient. As an industry, we are already on the right path towards achieving sustainability with our efforts in plastic recycling, robotics, integrated pest management programs with an emphasis on biological controls and safe pesticide alternatives. A fundamental component we must successfully manage will be achieved through a concerted investment effort in building and enhancing the knowledge and skills of our workforce.” Elliott Akintola, Horticultural Agronomist and Sales at GCP.

To explore how we can assist you with specialist knowledge and solutions please feel welcome to contact us at gardencityplastics.com or call your local GCP branch on 1300 695 098.

The National Vegetable Protected Cropping Centre (NVPCC) at Western Sydney University is Australia's first, world-class, research, education and training facility showcasing high-tech glasshouse infrastructure and control systems. It expands opportunities in modern protected cropping education. This \$7 million joint initiative between Western Sydney University (WSU) and Hort Innovation provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the industry to tap into the latest global research and practices within greenhouse crop production. The availability of modern research and practice supports growers in making their own operations more efficient to meet increased demand. Indeed, as an industry, this provides an opportunity to continuously develop these skills for Australia's next generation of specialists and professionals.

Western Sydney University offers short courses in protected cropping that are tailored towards building skills in a particular area of expertise; Biosecurity & Pollination, Plant Nutrition and Climate Control & Technology. The units are offered online to allow employees to streamline their studies around current work commitments. The university also offers a postgraduate certificate/diploma in protected cropping for those at senior grower or management levels wishing to return to study for a specialist masterclass or wanting to matriculate into a Masters of Science (MSc) or Masters of Business Administration (MBA) with this specialisation. For more information on the study options available, contact the university engagement officer, Louise Graham at l.graham@westernsydney.edu.au or the lecturer, Michelle Mak at m.mak@westernsydney.edu.au.

GCP has over four decades in the horticultural and ornamental industry, making it well-positioned to identify industry needs and propose changes to address those needs. The most valuable asset to GCP is its people. The strong community they assemble allows it to provide the best solutions to its clients; in effect, creating a strong ongoing relationship with customers. GCP customers range across various industry sectors. This has ensured over time the acquiring of both expertise and experience. Our experience

Phase 2 of the Plant Sure Project Begins!

The Plant Sure Consortium, of which NGINA is the project lead, is pleased to announce that the NSW Environmental Trust has approved a revised business plan for Phase 2 of the project. NGINA and the Plant Sure Consortium will conduct a ‘proof of concept’ 18-month, small-scale trial in NSW, to assess if the scheme will be viable, credible and self-sustaining into the future.

Phase 2 will build on the research work completed during Phase 1, including further refining the Macquarie University *Ornamental Plant Decision Support Tool* and completing the development of all 14 scheme components recommended by the University of Wollongong.

The brief in Phase 2, is to test the premise that the Plant Sure scheme will make it easier for the supply chain to ‘garden responsibly’—from production nursery through to the consumer. The Plant Sure planning model is based on a shared value, sustainable business model. It will exert a push-pull supply chain strategy, with points-of-difference (POD) product positioning at both ends of the supply chain. This will create a new market niche to ‘responsibly produce’ and ‘responsible source’ ornamental garden plants that are non-invasive.

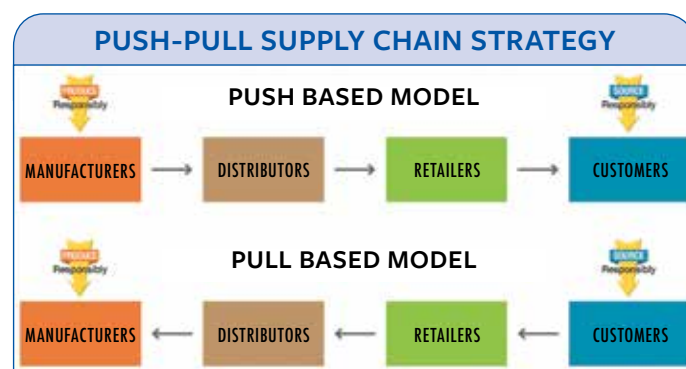
*The Plant Sure **push-based** model promotes environmental stewardship behaviours in producers, at the manufacturing end of the supply chain. The **pull-based** model promotes sustainable sourcing behaviours in customers, at the consumer end of the supply chain.*

The Consortium will research and develop a robust communication strategy to create a new campaign that will influence ornamental plant consumers to ensure they are ‘gardening responsibly’—creating a demand surge for ‘responsible’ alternatives (plants with a low risk of invasiveness).

Project Lead Aimee Freimanis said, “the scheme targets early adopters of ‘responsible gardening’ to generate a positive tipping point for change across the entire greenlife supply chain, by influencing the popularity and availability of specific ornamental plants. This builds on the Grow Me Instead (GMI) program, which encourages both industry and consumers to avoid using invasive plants and instead seek out better alternative, non-invasive plants.”

The difference with the Plant Sure scheme is that plant lists will be based on robust, scientific research carried out by Macquarie University, and then categorised and agreed by cross-sectoral stakeholders from industry, government and community.

“During Phase 2 we will conduct extensive consultation with as many stakeholders as possible. We will be seeking industry participants to join us to help co-design the categorisation process to create our recommended plant lists for this voluntary scheme. We will also ensure that there is a transparent, trusted, certification process to audit and recognise responsible traders across the entire supply chain. Scheme members will be provided with marketing collateral and advice to help influence their supply chain partners,” she added.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION OR TO SIGN UP TO BE PART OF THE SMALL-SCALE TRIAL OF THE SCHEME, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT OUR CONSORTIUM MEMBERS:



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Aimee Freimanis,
Project Manager, Ecohort Pty Ltd
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Business Benchmarking Tool Webinar: A Practical Demonstration

Did you miss the online practical demonstration of the latest edition of the nursery business financial benchmarking tool?

The webinar is now available online for any growers who missed the session. To watch the webinar, head to: youtube.com/watch?v=jLsESMDbXEo&feature=youtu.be

Conducted by Rebecca Moriarty and Jan Paul van Moort from ACIL Allen Consulting, this webinar engaged cross-industry representatives, sharing an overview of the latest Nursery Industry Statistics 2018–19 report, its key findings and how this data has been used to inform the tool.

The webinar explains how to navigate the tool, covering the basics on how to get started, through to how to input and interpret business data.

Rebecca and JP also shared insights into how they are working to further refine future editions of the tool as they collect more data in the future.

The financial benchmarking tool allows you to compare the performance of your business against industry averages, with the aim to boost productivity and profitability of your businesses. The tool is free for levy payers and available for download.

Growers are invited to utilise this resource, which allows them to see key industry trends and statistics, and assess core aspects of the business, such as turnover, sales by product type and market, wages and input costs, sentiment



and expectations, against those operating in similar segments across the industry.

To request access to the Business Benchmarking Tool, contact Greenlife Industry Australia via email: info@greenlifeindustry.com.au

Project partners: Greenlife Industry Australia, ACIL Allen Consulting and Down to Earth Research.

The 'Nursery Industry Statistics 2017/18 to 2019/20' (NY17008) project is funded by Hort Innovation using nursery industry levy and funds from the Australian Government.

(This article was first published on yourlevyatwork.com.au on 15 July 2020.)





Plant Life Balance — Nursery Accreditation

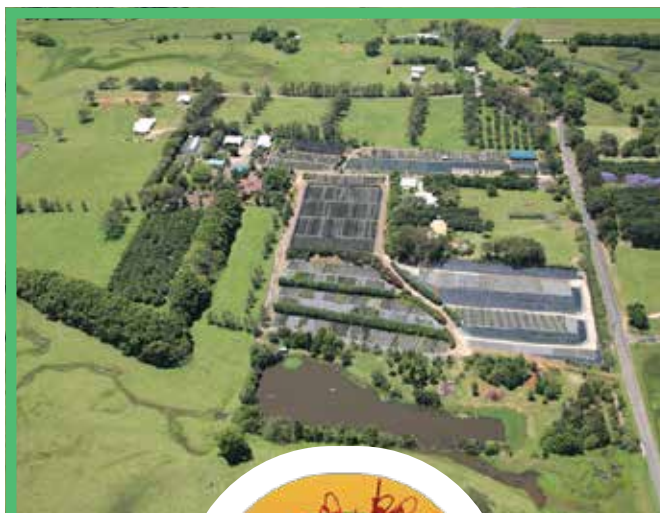
For half a century, scientists have been carrying out experiments to show the world that plants are good for our health and happiness. That's a lot of experiments.

Plant Life Balance has worked with scientists at RMIT University and the University of Melbourne to take this world of research and make it easy to understand. The resulting findings and report, which is called *The Simple Science*, are what the entire Plant Life Balance campaign is based on.

In order to ensure nurseries are well-equipped to promote the benefits of plants and trees, and answer any customer questions about Plant Life Balance, we have developed a short learning module for retailers about the Simple Science, that once completed, will mean your nursery is Plant Life Balance accredited. We know that there are many different accreditations already out there for the industry, so have specifically designed this one to not be difficult or time consuming.

This learning module takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. Following completion, your nursery will be added to the Plant Life Balance nursery finder, you can request to be sent the in-store POS kit and you can add the Plant Life Balance logo to your email signature or website.

The accreditation can be accessed here:
plantlifebalance.com.au/accreditation.



Production Manager

Cape Nursery, a wholesale production nursery situated in the Byron Bay area, is looking for a Production Manager, with a minimum of 3 years' experience.

As well as having a hands-on approach to their work, the successful applicant must show demonstrable experience in:

- Supervision of nursery staff
- Organising work schedules
- Knowledge and management of pests and diseases
- Plant production and quality to NATSPEC standards
- Spraying and chemical use (hold current ChemCert)
- Excellent organisational skills
- Strong communication skills

Salary package (negotiable on experience).

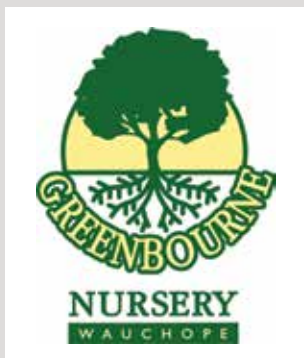
Short-term accommodation is available to the successful applicant.

**** A minimum of 3 years' experience in a production nursery is essential! ****

Send resumes via email to sales@capenursery.com.au or, alternatively, via fax 02 6684 7365.

Meet Our Members

Greenbourne Nursery



Business owner(s): Paul and Kristin Glessing

Business name: Greenbourne Nursery

Address: 239 High Street, Wauchope, NSW 2446

Business phone: 02 6585 2117

Business email: greenbourne.nursery@midcoast.com.au

Number of staff: 12

Website: greenbournenurserywauchope.com.au

Facebook: Greenbourne Nursery & Giftshop Wauchope

Instagram: greenbourne.nursery

Greenbourne Nursery has been in Wauchope for over 30 years and is heavily supported by the local community. Today it is a family owned and run business that supplies roses, seedlings, trees, shrubs, fruit trees, pots, plants, wall art, giftware, water features and other landscape supplies to the Mid North Coast community, with regular customers coming from Taree, Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and other nearby towns.

The owners are Paul and Kristin Glessing, both underground miners from Mount Isa in Queensland, who share a keen interest in gardening. They bought the nursery three years ago with only home gardening experience under their belts and an idea that when they moved to Wauchope “they might get into growing some plants” on their property.

Years before purchasing the nursery Paul and Kristin bought a block of land at Mortons Creek (which is only 10 minutes out of Wauchope), so they always knew they would settle in the area, they just didn’t know when. They also knew that when they eventually moved to Mortons Creek, finding employment in the area wouldn’t be easy and that in order to secure employment they may have to buy a business!

Living in Mount Isa and both working shifts as underground miners while looking after their very young daughter is what eventually prompted them to start the relocation process to Mortons Creek—the shift work just wasn’t conducive to a family friendly lifestyle. As they predicted, there wasn’t much work around so they began their search for businesses for sale, which was when Greenbourne Nursery popped up—pregnant with their second child at that point and up for the challenge, they took the plunge and the rest, as they say, is history.

When we asked them what drew them to the nursery and garden industry Kristin said, “The knowledgeable people. We have found people in the nursery industry are interesting, caring and always willing to teach. Plus, it’s an industry that will be around forever. People will always need plants, so we figured it was a pretty safe business to get in to.”

“...all our customers are happy to be here. No one walks into a garden centre because they have to, it’s not like a servo or a supermarket.”

And to increase their knowledge of the nursery and garden industry, Paul and Kristin have immersed themselves in



managing the business. “We found that it’s the best way to learn everything there is to know about the plants, our customers and what sells,” said Paul.

Talking about customers, Kristin says, “We have beautiful customers. One thing we really love about the industry is that all our customers are happy to be here. No one walks into a garden centre because they have to, it’s not like a servo or a supermarket. Our customers are passionate about plants and that passion is very contagious.” Which is why at Greenbourne they really focus on customer service. Their staff are not just horticulturalists, they are passionate gardeners and that passion really shines through.

Since Paul and Kristin have taken over the nursery they’ve not been without their challenges. Like many in the industry, they’ve suffered through the worst drought on record and horrendous bushfires, which pretty much shut down the nursery in the middle of spring last year, and now, of course, COVID-19.

On a personal level and probably one of life’s nicer “challenges”, was the arrival of their son who decided to

make his way into the world only six weeks after they took over the nursery (2 September), which was right at the start of the busiest season. They also lost a key employee four weeks after that.

The Glessings acknowledge that they wouldn’t be where they are today without the help and support of the previous nursery owners, who have been a huge support and helped to ensure their business continued to thrive through these challenging times. It’s shown Paul and Kristin just how supportive the nursery and garden industry is and that the people involved are open to sharing and imparting knowledge that can help fellow businessmen progress in the industry.

When asked where they see their business over the next few years, Kirstin said, “With the current COVID situation we feel that there is huge potential for growth and expansion. The nursery and garden industry is really thriving at the moment and we have big plans for our little country nursery.”

Welcome to NGINA Paul and Kristin, and the Greenbourne Nursery team!

WHAT ARE YOUR BUSINESS GOALS?

To meet our full potential and be the best nursery we can be.

WHAT’S UNIQUE ABOUT GREENBOURNE NURSERY?

Our layout. We like to set up our nursery so that when you walk in it’s like walking into a garden and not just a garden centre.

WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE TO YOUR SUCCESS?

Our staff and the support of the people around us, including the previous nursery owners and growers.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Make sure you have a really good team of staff, ask lots of questions, all the time, people are only too happy to share information with you, it’s a hard slog and it won’t be easy but it will be worth it.



From left to right: Joel Seguna, Tristan O'Neill, Kristin Glessing, Shippy George and Paul Glessing

Perenniale Plants Nursery



Business owner(s): Chris Cuddy

Business name: Perenniale Plants Nursery

Address: 52 Rodd Street, Canowindra, NSW 2804

Business phone: 0427 077 798

Business email: plants@perenniale.com.au

Nursery size (acres): 1

Number of staff: 2.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

Website: perenniale.com.au

Facebook: Perenniale Plants

Instagram: perenniale_plants

Owned by Chris Cuddy and located in Canowindra, Perenniale Plants Nursery is a retail nursery and emporium specialising in rare, hard-to-find frost- and drought-tolerant perennials, and drought-tolerant shrubs, with a focus on species from the Mediterranean, Africa, the Middle East and parts of North America. Perenniale also operates a very successful online business, selling products via its website.

Perenniale's mission:

“To keep getting better at what we do, particularly by finding new and interesting plants that thrive in our climate.”

Chris grew up next to bushland in Sydney and spent his childhood kicking around the bush, which is where he developed a love of plants and the natural world.

In high school he landed a job at a propagation nursery in Terry Hills and every Saturday he'd get on his bike, go to work and, most weeks, would return home with more plants than money!

Chris studied a Bachelor of Horticultural Science at Sydney University, graduating with honours. While at university he was awarded a scholarship with A J Newport & Son nurseries in Winmalee, which provided money to help him through university, as well as eight weeks' work experience in their extensive production facility. Chris also ran a small landscaping company working on Sydney's North Shore. Following university, he moved to the country for a job in production horticulture. He had a brief break, getting involved in education and then Landcare Australia, before he then started his own business.

When we asked Chris what his plans had been at the outset he said, “I just wanted to grow stuff, because that's what I was made for. I hoped that somewhere along the way I'd be able to support my family doing what I do.”

However, moving from Sydney to Canowindra (which is a 4.5-hour drive west of Sydney), Chris had to modify his gardening style as most of the plants he'd liked in Sydney didn't cope with the blazing summers and freezing winters of the central west. He'd already been purchasing what he thought were suitable plants from Victoria and some proved successful while others didn't, so he started looking into plants that would survive both the dry/heat and the frost—by doing this he soon realised there was a gaping hole in the market. So, tentatively, he began growing plants that survived these extreme conditions to sell locally and online. To his surprise, it worked!



Lomelosia cretica Aphrodite—a tough plant that never stops flowering during the warmer months. The purple is a unique colour Perenniale introduced from Greece a few years ago



Initially the business was just Chris, operating from a small rental's backyard. Chris and his wife were then given the opportunity to purchase a home with a large paddock included behind the backyard and it's this large paddock that he developed into Perenniale's current production facility, which incorporates a propagation house, a shadehouse and a greenhouse, alongside a lovely display garden. All plants are grown outside—they bake in full sun during summer, then freeze in winter.

In the early years, Chris employed a couple of casual workers but at the height of the drought had to choose between paying them or contributing something to his household, so there was a year where he was doing everything himself. Last year he even considered taking on some night work to keep the business afloat. However, having a wife with a teaching degree certainly helped during those early years of establishment. (Farmers in the Canowindra area who are married to teachers or nurses joke about having an 'off-farm investment'!)

“No one gets into this industry to get rich, we're here because we love plants, growing things, enriching our own and others' lives.”

Last November, Perenniale was featured in “Buy from the Bush” (an online initiative that aims to connect rural communities and bush businesses affected by severe drought with city customers), which absolutely saved his bacon! Because Perenniale has a small emporium attached to the nursery, people bought a lot of garden tools and gifts, as well as plants, and Perenniale's weekly postage runs grew

exponentially. In February, Chris was pleased that he could afford to hire a trainee and another young casual. Very recently (after the magnificent contribution made by COVID-lockdown gardeners), he's been able to employ yet another staff member to help with propagation (a fellow Canowindra resident, who used to do tissue culture for CSIRO!).

When asked what makes Perenniale unique, Chris says, “We grow all the plants we sell, specifically for the extremes of inland and southern Australia. The plants are grown outside, the pots literally freeze in winter and bake in summer, so they thrive when they get to their new homes. We have developed a loyal following: our customers travel from interstate and from around our region to visit us. Often the customers who visit the nursery have already been mail order customers who've taken the opportunity when travelling through our region to see the place for themselves. As we live on site there tends to be quite a family feel for customers visiting our business.”

Perenniale's customers are very savvy gardeners who are always on the lookout for new and interesting plants, as well as high-quality garden tools and accessories. Extremely positive feedback around the quality of the plants and how they've thrived when planted, as well as the emporium stocking a unique range of high-quality, interesting gifts and gardenware, means that customers come back time and time again.

Chris has faced many challenges along the way including a head injury in 2012, which took him a long time to recover from. The recent drought with its ongoing water restrictions, stretching over several years, has also had a huge impact on both his local community and business.

These challenges have made Chris realise they have some very good and faithful people around them, who've shown great friendship and support to his family and his business. He's learned to wait, to not push and try to force things to happen but to give things time to happen (or not). Simultaneously, he's learned to take risks and just do what he can do, like investing in a new website and diversifying his product mix.

To give back to the Canowindra community Chris employs young people from the local high school, offering them after-school and weekend work. He says, "In a country town, there is an interdependence between businesses and we have a great loyalty and commitment to the good of our town, and the part our business can play in bringing visitors in and supporting the local economy while they are here."

What does Chris attribute to the success of Perennialle? "There are a lot of factors that have contributed to our success. Vision, creativity, hard work and a wife and family who are behind me all the way, supporting and encouraging me to keep going. My wife and I were willing to live simply for the time it has taken for the business to be able to support us, and to celebrate the small successes along the way."

When asked what he finds most rewarding about being part of the nursery and garden industry Chris says, "I have enjoyed meeting interesting, creative and like-minded people at the various plant fairs and events. I also enjoy bringing new, interesting and different plants into the market, or helping people see existing plants in new ways."

And when asked about where he sees his business going over the next few years, he says, "In the next year we would love to build on the success of the past year with the new website, larger customer lists and email marketing to cement the growth for the online portion of the business. We are also looking at ideas to build our retail presence in Canowindra and increase the amount of visitors who know about and visit us in person."

We asked Chris what one piece of advice he would give to someone just starting out: "If you want a steady, consistent income, and want to go home at the end of the day, get a day job. However, for those of us who love growing, there's nothing quite like the joy of growing a beautiful plant and seeing the joy it brings to the customer."

Welcome to NGINA Chris.

What's your philosophy or saying that motivates you in your workplace?

I love the intricacy and beauty in plants. For me, gardening makes me feel alive and planting is like an artist's brushwork, mixing colours, textures, form and function. In our garden I can do that, and inspire people who visit to create their own beautiful gardens.

FUN FACT

"My wife is a singer/songwriter. She has written a love song for me called "In Our Garden", and she has performed it for a visiting tour group, as well as part of her performances elsewhere."



Chris Cuddy



July Sydney Trade Day

After a three-month hiatus and despite the challenges of a slightly different site layout, COVID-19 restrictions and threatening monsoon weather, Trade Day was back in full swing last month at Hawkesbury Showground. There was a really happy vibe, the rain stayed away and the sun made a welcome appearance. It was the first Trade Day for our new CEO, Anita Campbell, and Lynn Morris, our Communications & Membership Officer, who both helped out at the main gate taking temperatures, swiping Trade Day cards and handing out Trade Day flyers. Here are just a few photos from the day:



Phil Smith from Little Edan Bamboo



Tony Matson from Cutabove Tools



Rick Warwick from Bamboo Down Under



Martin Horwood, Senior Biosecurity Officer,
Greater Sydney Local Land Services



Matt Birkwood from Bamboo World Nursery with Anita



Greg Edwards from Sanctuary Point Garden Centre with Anita



Des Leeke, Anita and Robert Love from Batlow Rhododendron Nursery



Jarrad Savic from Greener Growth Nurseries and Anita

Plants!!

NORTHERN RIVERS

SPRING TRADE DAY

Presented by Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT, Northern Rivers Branch



Tuesday 8 September 2020

- ✓ \$300 lucky door prize entry to pre-registered buyers
- ✓ Free breakfast starts 7.00 am, trading commences 7.30 am
- ✓ Growers and retailers are invited to attend the Spring Trade Day
Welcome Dinner & Social Drinks
Wollongbar Tavern, 53 Simpson Avenue, Wollongbar
6.30 pm, Monday 7 September 2020

SEE YOU THERE!



For further information call Julie-Anne Pearce, Pearce's Nurseries
t: 02 6628 1289 e: julespearce@bigpond.com



A gathering of all things **GREEN** for the
nursery and garden industry

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Why your business needs cyber insurance

IF YOU HAVE AN INTERNET CONNECTION YOU'RE AT RISK FROM A CYBER-ATTACK WHICH COULD HAVE A DISASTROUS EFFECT ON YOUR BUSINESS.

Here's how to protect yourself.

A cyber-attack happens every 39 seconds. Not a day goes by without an attack or data breach hitting the headlines. Businesses in all industries, and of all sizes, are more than ever the targets of online threats.

You may think that these attacks will never happen to you but unfortunately that isn't the case. According to research figures, more than 500,000 small businesses fell victim to a cyber-attack in 2017 – and that number is growing.

In fact, 61% of breaches hit SMEs and 60% of those impacted are out of business within six months of the attack. The cost of breaches is growing steadily.

The most common cyber-attacks take the form of

- phishing and social engineering, where an attacker pretends to be someone known to you
- malware, such as viruses or other software that accesses or damages your systems
- ransomware, which is malware that locks you out of your systems unless you pay a ransom
- human error, when your own people make a mistake that provides access to criminals.

Cyber security is the best first step to ensuring you stay protected online, but your cyber insurance plays an important role in getting you back on your feet.

Cyber insurance acts in the same way as any other insurance policy – it helps you pick up the pieces in the aftermath of a security breach, covers your business for a variety of threats and gives you access to experts to help you contain, control and recover from an attack.

It does this through a four-step process.

- 1. Prepare:** our cyber specialists help you identify the hidden risks you face, and the things you need to protect.
- 2. Threat:** cyber insurance protects you from a range of threats including human error, ransomware, malware and social engineering.
- 3. Expertise:** cyber insurance gives you access to a suite of experts, from legal to PR advice, to IT specialists and forensics.
- 4. Response:** if your business is forced to close after an attack cyber insurance helps you pay the bills during any damage.

FAIL TO PLAN, PLAN TO FAIL

Know your risk – if you don't know what you need to safeguard how can you protect it? Start by identifying what the most important parts of your business are.

Manage your exposures – working with cyber security specialises can help you decide on the best practical ways you can protect your business.

Transfer your risk – if things go wrong insurance can make the difference between recovery or closing your doors for good.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Want to find out more about your cyber risk and how cyber insurance can help you? Our specialists are here to help. Contact the friendly Gallagher NGINA team by calling **8838 5736** or drop us an email to **NGINA@ajg.com.au**.

Garden City Plastics

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Precision feeding

- ✓ Long term feed
- ✓ Reduce labour cost and frequency of application
- ✓ Full package nutrient with trace elements
- ✓ Choosing the right longevity to provide nutrients beyond sales



Osmocote[®] Exact

- ✓ Precise controlled nutrient release plus trace elements matching crop demands
- ✓ Advanced 3rd generation technology
- ✓ Available in various longevities with coloured 'tracer' prills

Osmocote[®] Pro

- ✓ Second generation technology also available

CODE: CONTACT GCP FOR PRODUCT RANGE



Osmocote[®] Fusion Technology

- ✓ Contains fast, slow and controlled release nutrients plus trace elements
- ✓ 4-5 Months longevity
- ✓ Fusion Technology prills designed to stick to pot soil surface, prevents spilling when pots tip over

CODE: OSTOPDRESSFT



Quick Green-up

- ✓ Quick green-up effect thanks to the high N analysis
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- ✓ Recommended when plants are irrigated by overhead sprinklers, hand watered or drip irrigation only

CODE: OSGREENFIX



Osmoform[®] NXT

- ✓ Fast green-up effect
- ✓ Slow release nitrogen, slow release potassium and trace elements with high plant available iron
- ✓ Includes silicon for stronger plants
- ✓ Granules bind to the surface of soil to reduce loss of nutrient when pots tip over

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