

NGIA CLIPPINGS

News from the Nursery & Garden Industry



March 2010 - Issue no.2

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This Month's Nursery Paper

In-field rapid, portable & cost effective plant disease diagnostics



The Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ) has identified a plant disease diagnostic product developed by United Kingdom based company, Forsite Diagnostics, that

is portable, cost effective, accurate, rapid and reliable (96% correlation to laboratory based diagnosis).

In this Nursery Paper Queensland Industry Development Manager John McDonald outlines the technology behind and the application of the Pocket Diagnostic™ Test Kits relevant to the Australian horticultural industry.

Grasp Your Opportunities in Darwin – Register Now!



There is not long to go until the NGI National Conference to be held in Darwin from April 19 – 22. Don't miss out on this exciting national industry event.

Held in the Northern Territory's capital, the tropical weather, rich indigenous culture, laid back lifestyle and breathtaking national parks in and around Darwin will make for an unforgettable experience. The Anzac weekend follows the event so why not make the most of this stunning destination and take a holiday after Conference closes?

An industry conference not to be missed!

This year's Conference program features topics for all of industry; sessions will demonstrate, inform and stimulate you to identify the opportunities facing your business.

Conference sessions will cover:

- The latest on the looming Woolies Vs Bunning's Vs Garden Centres battle. Find out what to expect and the potential benefits and threats for growers, allied traders and retailers. Is this an opportunity for growers to improve their trading terms with the 'Big Boxes' or will Woolies look to a radically new style of green-life supply? We'll give you the inside info!

- A talk from Australia's most popular politician. Local MLA Gerry Wood, a graduate of Burnley Horticultural College, polled over 70% of the primary vote last election against the ALP, CLP and Greens. His recipes for success have lessons for us all.

- Opportunities to learn about the instant plant pathogen diagnostic test kits. For under \$20, you can do your own tests for pathogens such as phytophthora, pythium and many more.

- Productivity and profitability from staff, how do you attract good staff and retain them to maximize return on investment, want to know more? Annette Gillanders, Managing Director of BiZnorth Pty Ltd will give you an insightful session on how to manage this costly but vital part of your business.

Meet, mingle and have fun with our entertaining and rewarding social program!

Enjoy a fun-filled social program- at the Welcome Function get up close and personal with saltwater crocs, are you game enough to enter the cage of death or to feed the crocs from the feeding platform? What about handling the reptiles? Come and join us if you are game!

What is Territory rig? Show us your best impersonation of a Territorian by dressing up for night at the NextGen theme night function. Join us for fun and games such as whip cracking, a thong throwing competition, toad races and don't miss out on the chance to see 'Tiffany and the Curls' playing live.

Continued next page

Grasp Your Opportunities in Darwin – Register Now!

The Conference will end on a high with the NGIA 2010 Awards Gala Dinner, 'Under the Stars with the Stars'. Celebrate the Best of the Best at one of Darwin's premier function venues, by Fannie Bay on the grounds of the picturesque museum gardens, a unique and memorable venue to celebrate industry's top achievers.

The 2010 NGI National Conference - a must-attend event for all of industry. Be quick! Registrations close April 15. To register go to

www.ngia.com.au or for more information ph Natalie Walker on (02) 9876 5200

Past exhibitors – if you want your business to have a presence at National Conference this year there is still the opportunity to educate delegates about what you do with a satchel insert. To find out more contact Kobie Keenan on 0410 686 901

Josh Byrne promotion good news for young retail nursery



The 'Win Josh Byrne for a day' promotion has been a huge success.

The competition was designed to drive business into garden centres by giving customers the opportunity to win Josh Byrne for the day. Garden centres paid \$100 to participate and in return received point of sale material to help drive the competition, as well as their name listed in Gardening Australia magazine for four months.

Around 100 garden centres took part in the campaign and a follow-up survey showed that most believed it was good value for money and would participate again if they had the opportunity. There were 2,633 entries Australia-wide which is about 10 times more entries than Gardening Australia magazine normally receives for competitions!

The winner was David Licciardello from Queensland who purchased product from Go Green Rainforest Nursery in Glenview. Competition entrants had to tell Gardening Australia magazine about their biggest gardening challenge. David's winning answer was:

"Trying to grow an organic fruit n veg garden while my Italian traditional father telling me it's impossible."

David will receive a garden consultation from Josh Byrne.

Owner of Go Green Rainforest Nursery Simon Smith says he was "stoked" the

winner came from the nursery he runs with his wife Melissa. "We had a massive response from our customers. We really, really promoted the competition as we wanted to see one of our customers win."

The garden centre pushed the competition heavily at the point of sale. The staff talked to every customer about the promotion and had the forms right next to the EFTPOS terminal. They also ran their own competition alongside the Josh Byrne promotion, offering the winner \$250 worth of native plants.

Simon and Melissa decided to involve their garden centre in the promotion because they like the GYO concept. "We are in an area of South East Queensland which has a fantastic climate for growing your own produce," says Simon. If a similar promotion was to run again the garden centre would "absolutely" take part. "It created a great ice-breaker for interacting with customers and the response we had was overwhelming. Four weeks into the promotion we had already run out of our first lot of entry forms."

The nursery was first established in 1999. Initially Simon and Melissa started growing rainforest plants as a hobby and selling them at markets. In 2006 they expanded their wholesale production and began selling to nurseries throughout South East Queensland. In 2008 they relocated their nursery due to higher demand, and have



Melissa and Simon Smith from Go Green Rainforest Nursery with their children Sophie, Lochlan and Reilly.

since increased their production further and opened the retail outlet.

"We are very happy with the way retail has been accepted," says Simon. "We love Australian wildlife and are passionate about promoting those plants that aren't always noticed. We like to encourage people to incorporate these plants into their gardens."

Simon believes the campaign was a good way to help a young retail nursery like his increase sales. "It was great value for money as for \$100 we got our business' name in a major gardening magazine, promotional material, and opened up the opportunity for our customers to meet Josh Byrne."



Focus on industry careers at the NSW Royal Easter Show

The Nursery & Garden Industry will be represented this year at the 2010 Careers in Agriculture Expo which is taking place during this year's NSW Royal Easter Show. The special careers expo will take place for one day only on Tuesday, April 6 from 9:30am until 3:30pm and NGI aims to promote to school students the exciting

breadth of career opportunities that exist within Amenity Horticulture.

The Expo will also contain a number of speaking timeslots and NGIA has taken the opportunity to utilise one of these slots to share with the audience the vast choice of careers on offer in the Amenity Horticulture sector. Fiona Kelly, NGIA National Training

Manager and Dr Anthony Kachenko, NGIA Environmental and Technical Policy Manager, will be on hand to speak with the secondary students, parents and teachers who will be attending the Expo. This is an opportunity too good to miss to spread the word about the NGI Green-Life Careers website and the on-going careers project managed by NGIA.



'What's up Doc' News from NGIA Environmental & Technical Policy Manager Dr Anthony Kachenko

NGIA submission to National Review of the Regulation of Agvet Chemicals

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is currently seeking regulatory reform of chemical regulation to reduce the burden on businesses and increase government productivity. As a result, COAG have asked the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) to consider in the first half of 2010, a proposal for a single, national framework to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulation of agricultural and veterinary (Agvet) chemicals.

In December 2009, a discussion paper titled 'A National Scheme for Assessment, Registration and Control of Use of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals' was released for stakeholder comment. This paper provided possible structures for a

single, national framework and detailed how it might be funded.

NGIA has provided a detailed submission to this discussion paper. In its submission, NGIA indicated that it supported the application of nationally standardised regulations relevant to pesticides, however, it emphasised that these regulations must be inclusive and have the ability to adapt to specific needs of industry as the situation may dictate.

NGIA stressed that these regulations must not overburden nor increase the costs that growers pay for the use of chemical products that are required to produce their crops and are essential in accessing relevant national and international markets.

It was also mentioned that industry must be consulted at every stage throughout the introduction of the national standardisation at both state and federal levels.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the submission, please contact Anthony Kachenko, NGIA Environmental and Technical Policy Manager at 02 8922 7006 or anthony.kachenko@ngia.com.au. Alternatively, please contact John McDonald, Queensland Industry Development Manager and National Minor Use Portfolio Manager at 07 3277 7900 or nido@ngiq.asn.au

Progress with these reforms will be communicated through future editions of clippings or on the NGIA website.



President's Column

During February I undertook a trip around the States with NGIA CEO Robert Prince. The purpose was to meet Members and open up discussion on the key issues are that your Association is facing.

We have not yet visited Western Australia or the Northern Territory but will be covering these States in due course.

The feedback was open, honest and generally positive. After some time back in my nursery I have thought about some key issues which should be of concern to us all. These include:

- **Financial stability of our Associations:**

Financial planning to provide a sound structure for our industry representation is missing. We need to have a strong industry across the country, which we do not have at this stage. Is this because of dependence on handouts or is it a reflection of the financial impact of the drought and changed trading conditions?

Our Membership numbers are falling or at best static, yet we get reports of Members hardly ever seeing representatives from their State

Association. If we treated Members as "customers" maybe they would be happier and more engaged with what we are doing. The challenges ahead depend on us broad a representation.

- **Communication of HAL programs:**

It is evident that many people do not understand the process that is involved in using levy funds for industry programs. However, this has been communicated to the State Associations over the years and there are Nursery Papers and other information handouts explaining how the IAC works.

The "blurring" of where services such as Industry Development Officers and Business Development Officers are funded from may suit a State Membership drive, but creating confusion with growers on where their levy is utilised is not sound when everyone is asking for transparency. State publications and magazines are funded by HAL to ensure effective communication of industry program outcomes.

- **Industry representation:**

We took the opportunity to visit some

businesses during our travels. One store we visited (part of a large retail hardware focussed cooperative) had the worst display of plants both Robert and I had ever seen. Dead plants were marked down as 'end of line' and many of the others were heading for the same fate due to lack of water. The reason? The garden department in that store operates on the basis of 'sale or return'.

As a grower I work too hard and have invested too much to have products presented in this manner to the public. As an industry we must ensure that we do not 'dump stock' in a manner that will damage the entire industry. Plants have a value and all of us rely on that value being recognised and improved.

In summary, it was an interesting trip and I thank those who we met for their open discussion. The feedback will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan or Annual Operating plan that will be considered by your Board. I look forward to receiving ongoing feedback from Members.

Bryan Hillier
NGIA President



March 10

NGIQ Trade Day, Brisbane

Location: Brisbane, QLD

Contact: Sarah Manser

Ph: (07) 3277 7900

Email: info@ngiq.asn.au

Web: www.ngiq.asn.au

March 16

NGINA Trade Day, Newcastle

Location: Newcastle, New South Wales

Contact: Norma Peters

Ph: (02) 4982 8209

Email: info@ngina.com.au

Web: www.ngina.com.au

March 24 – 28

Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS)

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Contact: Kathleen Rushford

Ph: (03) 9864 1111

Email: Kathleen.rushford@imgworld.com

Web: www.melbflowershow.com.au

March 30

NGIV Trade Day

Location: Melbourne, VIC

Contact: NGIV Administration

Ph: (03) 9576 0599

Email: ngiv@ngiv.com.au

Web: www.ngiv.com.au

April 8 – 13

NGIWA Garden Week

Western Australia

Contact: NGIWA

Ph: (09) 9358 4811

Email: reception@ngiwa.com.au

April 19 - 22

2010 NGI National Conference 'Grasp Your Opportunities'

Darwin, NT

Contact: Natalie Walker

Ph (02) 9876 5200

Email: natalie.walker@ngia.com.au

Web: www.ngiaevents.com.au/conference2010

April 22

2010 NGI Awards Gala Dinner

Darwin, NT

Contact: Natalie Walker

Ph: (02) 9876 5200

Email: natalie.walker@ngia.com.au

Web: www.ngiaevents.com.au/awards2010



National Training Package – Latest News

Keep your eye out for the latest draft of the National Training Package. The AgriFood Skills Australia (ASA) website www.agrifoodskills.net.au was to have the most recent draft on their website by February 10 2010, however at the time of printing this edition of Clippings no documentation has been made available. Without this documentation we can't give you the date when industry feedback will be required, so we ask you to keep visiting the site until the documentation is available for us all to view. If history repeats itself, the timeline for feedback will be short!

It is now up to those within the industry to take a close look at these latest draft documents and provide feedback to NGIA and ASA. NGIA has been in the front line of 'battle' for over three years to ensure that industry requests for the updated

Training Package are heard and actioned by ASA. We will continue to represent the wishes of the industry until the bitter end. The future of our industry will rely heavily on the quality of its training graduates.

The draft documents are now loaded on the ASA website. ASA require feedback by Monday March 18. The info on the site is located at www.agrifoodskills.net.au/training-packages/merged-package-page/

In addition, please forward your feedback to NGIA via careers@ngia.com.au. Why do both? – We want to make sure that ALL feedback is heard by ASA – if we know about your feedback we can keep our eye on the ASA process.

For further information contact Fiona Kelly, NGIA National Training Manager ph (02) 9876 5200.

2010 Minister's Awards for Excellence – Are you a supporter of Australian Apprentices?

The Minister's Awards for Excellence recognise and reward organisations and individuals who make an outstanding contribution towards the training of Australian Apprentices. If you meet the eligibility why not give it a go?

Each regional winner of the awards will receive a cash prize of \$5000, a trophy and framed certificate. In addition, winners will be invited to receive their award at a presentation ceremony and dinner at Parliament House, Canberra in August 2010.

The Ministers Awards for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices recognise those employers who demonstrate commitment, innovation and outstanding achievement in the training of Australian Apprentices. Applications are now open. Closing on March 26, 2010.

The Minister's Award for Excellence for Commitment to Australian Apprenticeships recognises individuals who have made a significant, long-term

contribution to the training of Australian Apprentices though their business or role within an organisation as a senior tradesperson, mentor, in a training-related role or as an employer. Nominations will open at 8:00 AM (AEST) Monday, May 5, 2010.

To enter the awards, you will need to meet certain eligibility criteria and complete an official application form. This form can also be downloaded from www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au.

Current Australian Apprenticeship Incentive Program Information

If you are interested in viewing the most recent summary of the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program from 1 January 2010, it can be found at www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au via the Publications page. You can also find it via the Employer Assistance page at www.greenlifecareers.com.au

March edition of NGIA Clippings compiled and edited by Sarah McMahan, NGIA Communications & PR Coordinator.

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