



# What's Growing On

Official Journal of NGISA



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J50001750	Preforma Plug Tray w/Hole	78 Cell	270	520	5 trays
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# Next step in structural change

A new committee is currently being established to address and clarify the key elements and recommendations of the Structure Review Report released late last year.

It is called the Structural Review Advisory Committee and includes representatives of nursery & garden industry associations around Australia, including the national organisation, NGIA, and is collectively called the 'Network'.

At the time of going to print the members of the committee were yet to be decided, but we are hoping there will be good regional representation.

According to the Terms of Reference, the Committee will investigate and report on – but not limited to – the finances, systems, technology, governance, functions and roles of the proposed National Unity structure.

From there it will 'independently and unbiasedly' inform the members of all relevant information and then facilitate a vote on a proposed new structure of the Network. Dependent on the outcome of the vote, the committee will then be charged with facilitating the transition to the agreed new structure or provide recommendations back to the Network.

The committee will look closely at all the recommendations of the Structural Review Committee's report which include:

- A board with independent chair
- A national advisory council made up of members from the network
- CEO and national delivery team
- Regional managers and the most appropriate structure and region splits
- Special interest groups
- Heritage Committees and management of state assets
- Local branch structures

The national Unity model proposes a single national membership fee structure

so this will need to be considered by the Committee as well.

The Review Report outlined areas where members can expect to see benefits in the new model including:

- Commercial agreements and alliances
- National Grower Register
- Alliances with allied industry groups
- Opportunities for education and training

NGISA is keen to see the potential benefits outlined more fully or quantified as the committee investigates this aspect.

"At present our NGISA board cannot see the potential benefits of the national unity model outweighing those of our existing structure. Unless our members can see additional benefits in the proposal, then we will lose them as members if it goes ahead. This would be contrary to the aims of the whole exercise," says Graham Brown, NGISA president.

"We hope that SA will have representation on the Structural Review Advisory Committee and we will see our concerns raised and considered in any outcomes. We will support outcomes that can show value for money and improved benefits for you, our members."



## President's REPORT

*Welcome to 2017! It is now well underway and I hope members approach autumn and the rest of the year with optimism.*

*The major issue for our industry's organisation is the national structural change process now underway.*

*Your NGISA board was not supportive of the national unity model put forward, largely as we don't see any major benefits to our members, who we believe are very happy with the way our industry currently works at a state level.*

*Even though we were the only state opposed to the proposed model, Victoria, NSW and Queensland all had major reservations, so I am confident that as the Structural Review Advisory Committee moves forward, all the issues will be addressed and scrutinised.*

*Your board is committed to working with the committee to create positive change which will benefit you, the member.*

*We do not want to see a loss of member services, a major increase in member fees and a loss of good communications in any change, so we will participate as much as possible to put our views forward and to objectively look at what the committee eventually proposes for the industry.*

*I urge you to keep informed about the proposed changes, as YOU will have the final say on what is proposed.*

*NGISA in the meantime will make sure that you have as much information as possible, so that when decision time comes you can make yours with confidence.*



**DIARY DATES**

- Fantastic Autumn Trade Day - **Thursday March 9**
- Autumn issue of SA Gardens & Outdoor Living on sale - **Monday March 9**
- SA Autumn Garden Festival - **Sunday March 12**
- Easter - **April 14-17**
- Poplar Grove Trials - **April 20 & 21**
- SA Spring Garden Festival - **Saturday February 17**

### Cover photo:

The new Look Glynde Mitre 10 Garden Centre. One of the new promotional ideas was the use of testimonials from key customers. They were approached for a comment which was then used on one of the overhead signs, along with a smiling photo of them. Excellent pr!

**Nursery & Garden Industry of South Australia**  
505 Fullarton Road Netherby 5062  
**P: (08) 8372 6822**  
[www.ngisa.com.au](http://www.ngisa.com.au)







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Saturday 7.30am - 12 noon



# INDUSTRY SNIPPETS

## Autumn SA Gardens & Outdoor Living

The Autumn issue of SAGardens & Outdoor Living will be released on Trade Day, March 9.

The issue includes a great variety of gardening articles including an extraordinary home garden makeover in suburban Hilton, flowering shrubs for autumn, rakes for every occasion and how to make homemade passata. If any retailer would like to vary their order upwards, we do have a reserve we can draw from - just call the office on 8271 1012 or email [info@ngisa.com.au](mailto:info@ngisa.com.au)



## Pest and disease management workshop "Improving decision making processes"

This year's course will be run on Thursday June 1 at a South Australian nursery (to be advised closer to the date). It will address:

1. How to capture images of pest/disease problems cheaply.
2. Detailed process on how to diagnose unknown plant health problems. This section will cover a range of problems that can impact on plant health including those caused by insect, mite, disease and abiotic stress
  - a. Various symptoms will be discussed as well as possible causes. Management options and resources for many causes, including pesticides, will be discussed.
3. Plant health problem solving exercises.
4. Farm walk of host nursery and how they have changed management actions to improve plant health.
5. Pest and disease resources available to production nurseries through the levy funded project.



## SA Next Gen

The revitalised NEXT GEN group in SA is up and running following a meeting in January at Jongs Nursery with 12 people attending, along with Grant Dalwood from NGISA. The group is aimed at organising social and professional development activities for the younger generation in the industry. The age limit? It is around 35, but industry people who are up to and around 40 are welcome to join too, says Peter Jong, and those young at heart will be welcome to come to events as well.

A committee has been formed including Peter Jong, Carrie Prettejohn from Brunnings, Alastair McLean from Power Plants, Sam Hall from Greenstead Nursery and Chris Simon from Morgan Park Garden Centre.

As part of their Silver Sponsorship of NGISA Jong's are supporting the activities of Next Gen.



## SA Autumn Garden Festival on soon

The Festival is earlier this year, to fit around other public events here and in Victoria.

It is on Sunday March 12 and promises an even bigger range of stalls and attractions in its sixth year.

Several NGISA members are participating in the Festival which is on at the Clare Showgrounds, an easy two hour drive from Adelaide. It begins at 10am and finishes around 4pm.

# A new look at Glynde Mitre 10



The garden team (l to r) Marshall Miller, Sharon Ward, Simon Elliot and Tania Hobby.

If you are travelling along Montecute Road at Glynde and drive past Glynde Mitre 10, you cannot miss the huge new mural which stretches the length of the garden centre behind and more.

The mural depicts the four seasons of the year and has been part of the revamp of the garden centre undertaken



The new 'garDEN' information kiosk.

over the past six months.

Cat Southern at the store has been the project manager of the revamp and has worked with the garden centre team to complete the new look.

“Central to our garden centre is the new garDEN, an information kiosk which we believe to be the first of its kind in Australia,” says Cat.

The gazebo is equipped with a computer and flat screen TV linked into Yates Garden advisory service, where customers can get answers to their questions in real time from qualified horticulturalists.

“This doesn’t replace the advice they can get from our team, but means they can have a browse through other information as well,” says Cat.

It is also set up with a play area for small children, equipped with an iPad and toy barbecue.

“We are finding that it is being used regularly and parents are thankful as it gives their kids somewhere to go.”

The centre’s display racks have also been rearranged with new signage to make the shopping experience easy for customers.

In addition new testimonial signs have been hung from the ceiling and feature the top 16 customers of the garden centre making a comment about different aspects of the centre. customers love seeing what they have had to say.

Glynde Mitre 10 were recently re-audited for AGCAS accreditation and came through with flying colours. A great example of a good garden centre getting even better!

Congratulations to the Glynde Mite 10 team.



The new mural stretching along the length of the garden centre.

## A very different climate

While we bake in 40 degrees think of the northern hemisphere nurseries that have to cover all of their stock over winter and awake each day to heavy snow falls.

This restricts their growing season to only 3 months in some years.





# improve your plant life balance™

## Time for a little green intervention?

Consider these facts:

- An Ernst and Young study (Feb 2016) showed the average Australian now spends 10 hours and 24 minutes engaging with internet-connected devices (less time is spent sleeping),
- A National Health study conducted by the A.B.S 2014/15 has shown that 63.4% Australians are overweight or obese, with 27.4% of children overweight.
- Obesity has proven to increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes as well as impacting on a person's mental wellbeing.
- *Beyondblue* have quoted that 3 million Australians are living with depression or anxiety.

March 19 Independent Garden Centres across Australia will participate in Garden Releaf Day to help improve the health of local communities.

The aim will be to give their local communities A Helping Hand to GET INVOLVED with gardens and gardening.

They will provide ideas and inspiration to help EVERYONE enjoy a garden, get gardening or surround themselves in plants and healthy fresh food. Amongst other things there will be colour-themed activities and a focus on the benefits of plants and gardens to enrich our lives and garden centres will be exploding with beautiful plants and informative displays. Additionally, Garden Releaf 2017 will raise money to support *beyondblue*.

"We are delighted to advise that through the support of our Independent Garden Centres, the media, garden industry suppliers and the community in 2015 and again in 2016 the Garden Releaf program has so far raised around \$70,000 for *beyond blue*," said Karen Moad GCA President.



## FANTASTIC AUTUMN TRADE DAY

~ THURSDAY MARCH 9 ~

It is on again. South Australia's one and only Autumn Trade Day. This year the date is set on Thursday March 9, to be held at the Urrbrae Agricultural precinct.

All are welcome and there is sure to be plenty of plants and products on display, available to buy or available to order.

The Fantastic Autumn Trade Day is being sponsored by NGIA's Platinum sponsor, Van Schaik's BioGro, which means a beautiful gourmet breakfast and freshly brewed coffee or tea available free of charge, compliments of BioGro.

The day will also feature the launch of the autumn issue of SA Gardens & Outdoor Living!

Van Schaik's  
**bio gro**



## Promoting excellence in garden centres on 5aa

To promote gardening and, in particular, AGCAS accredited garden centres in South Australia, NGISA is now managing the 'Green Room' as part of the Michael Keelan gardening show on 5aa on Sundays.

The role is a simple one where representatives from AGCAS garden centres and other member companies will be taking calls from listeners and answering their queries, much as they would do every day in a nursery or garden centre.

The big benefit to our members is that they get around 10 minutes to talk about their business and promote what's selling, what's new and other topical news.

"The spot was previously conducted by Lee Prettejohn, who did a tremendous job promoting our industry and managing the calls. In discussions with Brunnings, our gold sponsor and a major advertiser on the program, and 5aa we were given the opportunity to manage the role and it was decided to give our AGCAS retailers a priority in promoting their businesses," says NGISA CEO, Grant Dalwood.

"Our garden centres and nurseries who have AGCAS status have shown themselves to stand for quality, excellence in service and presentation and high standards all round - this is what we want to promote as an industry."

The session begins at 6.30am and at 7am they are interviewed by Michael Keelan. Listen in on Sunday mornings to hear how your fellow members sound - so far they are doing really well!



## Promoting Environmentally friendly solutions



One of the initiatives of garden centres that scores points in the AGCAS audits is whether the centre has an environmentally selection of products that they promote as a first suggestion when it comes to handling pests and diseases. Morgan Park Garden Centre recently received accreditation again, scoring over 90% which puts them into the "Garden Centre of Excellence" category. Pictured above is their promotion of eco-friendly products.

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# Van Schaik's Bio Gro - a family success story



An aerial view of the Wandilo site.

The Van Schaik's Bio Gro (Bio Gro) story began over four decades ago, when Hans and Marjan Van Schaik established a small earth moving business, located within the heartland of Australia's Radiata pine plantations, Mount Gambier, South Australia.

Hans had a particular interest in soil management, and in the early 70's noticed that bark and organic residues that were by-products of the local forestry industry were either burnt or destined for landfill, and believed that those organic residues should and could be value-added.

Against popular opinion at the time, Hans went about testing, trialling and evaluating products derived from these

residues, and soon after expanded the company's operating portfolio to include the development, production and marketing of various forms of growing mediums, soil conditioners and mulching mediums.

Three years later, Hans and Marjan established Van Schaik's Organic Soils on a 12 acre site in Wandilo, South Australia. Following years of success, Van Schaik Organic Soils began to specialise in the development and production of value-added, bark-based growing media for the South Australian Nursery Production and Wholesale Industry.

Catering to demand, Van Schaik's Organic Soils then proceeded to purchase its current state-of-the-art EPA

Licensed Organic Processing facility, also located in Wandilo, South Australia and its current manufacturing facility in Mount Gambier, South Australia. In 1995, backed by equity partners Jim Carrail and Grant King, Bio Gro was created as a separate entity, to distribute products manufactured by Van Schaik's Organic Soils.

Recognising an opportunity for expansion, Bio Gro then expanded into the Victorian market, primarily through acquisition. The Australian Potting Mix Company was acquired as was the Pro Pine Company years later. Victorian operations are now located at the company's organic processing and manufacturing facility in Dandenong South, Victoria.

Since its establishment, Bio Gro has gone through a number of significant changes. In the mid 2000's, the board decided to merge Van Schaik's Organic Soils and Bio Gro, in order to streamline operations. In 2010, shareholder Grant King decided to retire, and sold his stake in the company back to the Van Schaik family. Furthermore, in 2013, co-managing director Anthony Van Schaik parted ways with the business, and his shareholdings were also acquired by the existing shareholders.

Since its inception, Bio Gro has grown considerably without forgetting one of its most important values: Family.



Grown locally, we offer plants that perform in seedlings, flowering annuals, perennials and landscaping packs.

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Big W, Bunnings, Home Timber and Hardware, Mitre 10, Plants Plus, Thrifty-Link Hardware and Garden Centres



Founders of the business, Marjan and Hans Van Schaik.



## Van Schaik's Bio Gro - a family success story cont.



The current Von Schaik family at the helm of Bio Gro – (l to r) Stephen, Liam, Steph, Matt, Heather and Emma.

Today, Bio Gro is once again entirely family-owned, with the Van Schaik family recently purchasing the remaining externally owned shares from Jim Carrail, the founder of Garden Grove - another proudly family-owned, South Australian business.

Hans and Marjan Van Schaik still take particular interest in the business, along with their son and now Managing Director, Stephen Van Schaik.

With Stephens's wife, Heather, also being actively involved throughout the business, as well as their two daughters Steph and Emma and two sons Matt and Liam, the family continues to master the art of running a thriving family business and

Van Schaik's  
**bio gro**

have their eyes firmly fixed on the future.

As well as continuing to establish honest, respectful and lasting relationships with our valued customers and key suppliers, Bio Gro and the Van Schaik family is firmly committed to continuing their support of the industry through major sponsorship of the Nursery and Garden Industry of South Australia.

Now the market leader in the production of high-quality growing media within

South Australia and Victoria, Bio Gro has been able to forge a strong reputation with growers for the quality, reliability and performance of its growing media.

With large-scale reserves and long-term supply contracts of high quality Radiata pine bark from the Green Triangle Region, combined with four decades of accumulated knowledge and adherence to Eco Hort and Bio Secure standards, Bio Gro is able to consistently produce well developed, tried and tested, and highly reliable substrates enabling trouble free cultivation for growers.

In conjunction with recently celebrating 40 years of business and the refresh of the Bio Gro logo, Bio Gro has also revamped the company website, ensuring a friendly and intuitive experience. The site features a training centre blog, which contains cultivating knowledge and reliable technical advice written by Bio Gro's horticultural experts.

In today's hyper-competitive and constantly evolving industry, Bio Gro understand that as a grower, your success is heavily dependent on the reliability, consistency and performance of growing media. Bio Gro strives to continue to set the benchmark for quality and sustainability throughout 2017, and beyond.

Bio Gro is the Platinum Sponsor of NGISA and we thank the Van Schaik family for their ongoing support.



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# Introducing Trev the tree & Stan the stobie pole



Legislation requires SA Power Networks to undertake vegetation clearance to ensure community safety, with bushfire mitigation being one of its key drivers. Up to 40 per cent of power outages can be attributed to interaction between powerlines and vegetation.

You can watch it or download the DVD from the SA Power Networks webpage <http://www.sapowernetworks.com.au> and YouTube channel: just type in 'trev and stan'

A new educational video has been developed by SA Power Networks to help educate the public about managing the risk of trees around powerlines. The animated video communicates SA Power Network's vegetation management messages to the public - in simple, easy to understand language and pictures.

The DVD stars Trev the Tree who co-exists in harmony with his friend Stan the Stobie and tells the story about caring for him and his mates under powerlines.

Trev the Tree highlights the importance of bushfire safety, vegetation management and appropriate species selection under powerlines.



## POPLAR GROVE WHOLESALE NURSERY ANNUAL TRIALS

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# Member profile: Cleveland Nursery at Stirling



James and Bronwyn Bennier at the nursery.

The Cleveland Nursery which sits just outside the township of Stirling is one of the oldest operating family-owned nurseries in the state, having been open for almost 54 years.

The nursery was first opened by Harold and Lola Bennier in 1964 and would later be purchased by their son and his wife, James and Bronwyn, in 2000.

Harold and Lola started out growing hydrangeas which would be sent via the old train line to florists in places like Pt Augusta. Eventually demand for a broader range became too high to ignore and the couple opened the nursery.

While James and Bronwyn maintained the nursery's revered stock of Azaleas, Camellias and Rhododendrons when they took over, they also brought a renewed focus on advanced tree growing. This focus paid off in spades for the couple when they both took

out the Award of Honour in last year's NGISA Awards of Excellence. James was recognised for his commitment to growing large trees in SA and Bronwyn for her six years of service on the NGISA board.

"We'd been growing advanced trees for ten years prior to buying the nursery. We initially started to import large advanced trees but then we decided we could do it ourselves," says Bronwyn.

Bronwyn cites their wide variety of rare plants and ample stock of deciduous trees as the nursery's signature strengths. As well as these strengths, Bronwyn says the secrets to success in the nursery business are honesty and friendliness when dealing with staff and customers. "I'm not going to sell someone 10 plants when all they need is four," she jokes.

The family dynamic of the nursery has

never been anything but helpful for the Benniers as Bronwyn praises the ease of working with both kids and parents. Most of our staff have been here for 10 years plus; very few leave unless they retire or move on to other things."

All the staff working at the nursery have studied horticulture with even the people hired to water the plants currently completing their certificates. The nursery is also AGCAS accredited, an aspect which Bronwyn believes is important in maintaining high standards.

This selective but rewarding approach to staffing exemplifies the careful passion the Bennier's have for quality control within their business. This is something they hope carries over to the next owner once they sell the nursery soon and go into a well-deserved retirement.



## Be Water Wise

SA Water is again reminding all South Australians to continue being water wise through the warmer months.

SA Water's Chief Executive Roch Cheroux said Water Wise Measures, which were first introduced in December 2010, are a permanent reminder to adopt smart watering practices and encourage efficient water use.

"South Australian households and businesses are mindful of water usage and have continued to be smart about how they use water," said Roch.

"Although we have had a late rainy season and had healthy inflows into the River Murray and our reservoirs during the past few months, it is important everyone continues to use water wisely."

For more information on Water Wise Measures, people can call the Water Wise Hotline on 1800 130 952, or visit [www.sawater.com.au](http://www.sawater.com.au).



John Hunwick shows one way to water the garden and remain "Water Wise".  
Despite the recent rains and cooler temperatures Lower Eyre Peninsula residents are being reminded to remain "water wise" about summer.  
...ing people across the region of the Water ... introduced in 2010 as a strategy ... practices and



It's  
simple to  
save water if  
you follow some  
simple tips...

# BE WATER WISE *in your garden*

**Group  
similar water  
use plants together**  
**Water well, not often**

**Water to suit  
the weather**

**Install drip  
or soak  
irrigation**

**Hand water  
any time**

**Mulch – to keep  
water in the  
ground**

**Get  
expert  
advice here at  
this garden  
centre**

**Sprinklers before  
10am after 5pm**



# Masterclasses begin

The Australian Centre of Horticultural Excellence (ACoHE) is providing the opportunity to learn from industry experts and gain nationally-accredited qualifications in horticulture while getting hands-on in some of the state's finest and most historic gardens.

Their 'Master Classes' are specialist courses run by industry experts on relevant and current horticulture topics. They are a great opportunity to network with others with similar interests, extend your expertise and stay up to date with the latest techniques.

At this stage, these scheduled for the months ahead are (all run from 10am to 3pm and will be held at the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden except for Pruning which will be at Urrbrae Agricultural High School):

## **The Art of Bonsai: Principles and Practices**

Dates: Sunday 26 March or Thursday 21 September

## **Plant Propagation: Principles and Practices**

Dates: Thursday 6 April, Sunday 7 May, or Sunday 17 September

## **Pruning for Fruit: Principles and Practices**

Date: Thursday 20 July

## **Advanced Plant Propagation: Leaf and Root cuttings, Grafting and Budding**

Dates: Thursday 10 August or Sunday 20 August

## **Demystifying Orchids**

Dates: Sunday 3 September

## **Unfurling the Inner Beauty of Ferns: Propagation Techniques**

Dates: Thursday 26 October

Flyers on each of these courses are available via the Botanic Gardens website, along with direct bookings. Visit [www.environment.sa.gov.au/botanicgardens/education](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/botanicgardens/education)



# New Water poster for garden centres

As part of our gold sponsorship arrangement with SA Water a simple water wise poster has been prepared for use in garden centres and nurseries. The poster is featured on the left.

It is designed to fit into the standard A4 poster holder, so it can be featured at point of sale to remind gardeners of simple steps to be waterwise.

The A4 poster will be initially distributed at the March Trade Day and sent out to Nurseries after that.



*Native Plant Wholesalers*

# Australian Flora for Horticulture



Native Plant Wholesalers is one of Australia's larger native plant growers and proudly based in South Australia near Mount Gambier. Begun 30 years ago by Australian native plant enthusiast, Phillip Dowling, the nursery now has 6 hectares of growing area producing over 800,000 plants per annum in 140mm and 200mm pots. A staff of more than 30 full-time and casuals, work with Phillip and nursery Manager Jason Dawe to produce and promote Australian flora for horticulture.



Native Plant Wholesalers has been a NGISA Member since 2000, an NIASA accredited nursery since 2009 and in 2011 achieved Biosecure HACCP certification. An extensive stocklist is available on the Native Plant Wholesalers website which is updated weekly for ordering. We offer quick and efficient delivery.

**Phone: 08 8726 6210**

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[www.nativeplantwholesalers.com.au](http://www.nativeplantwholesalers.com.au)



# New Releases for 2017

## Knights Roses

Among this year's new releases so far are five new roses from NGISA member Knights Roses.

They are:

- Always Remember. A floribunda rose with medium to large blooms with a honey/lemon fragrance. Grows to one metre with excellent disease resistance. Flowers are rich yellow with apricot tones. Gold medal winner around the world and supporting the Leukaemia Foundation.
- Butterfly Kisses. Another floribunda rose with large flowers in a pale pearl/pink colour. Flowers have a citrus fragrance and are a classic shape. Grows to one metre high by one metre diameter. Supporting Variety, the children's charity.
- Apricot Clementine. A patio/floribunda rose with bushy dense growth to around 60cm high. While the fragrance is mild the colour is a beautiful apricot with blushes of pink on the petals.
- Bellissimo Mum. Another floribunda with strong pink coloured flowers with white inner petals. The blooms are doubles mostly in clusters and are very fragrant – with the 'sweet smell of fruit tingles' they tell us. Grows to 80cm x 80cm
- Nelson Monfort. With abundant buds with pink tips, Nelson Monfort opens to yellow cupped, very full blooms and with time, the edges fade to cream. This large double flower with quartered centers has a fragrance with hints of old rose. It blooms in clusters throughout the spring to autumn season. Grows to 1.2 metres and as great disease resistance.



*Apricot Clementine.*



*Bellissimo Mum.*

## New from Poplar Grove Wholesale Nursery



### Alternanthera 'Tropical Thunder'

Tropical Thunder has slender leaves that will change colouring throughout the seasons, from green, bronze, bright red to deep burgundy. They make a wonderful pot plant and will even spill over the edge of a hanging basket or retaining walls/rockeries. They grow approximately 30cm tall by 40-50cm wide and are very hardy, just give them a prune to shape up when they become a little untidy and fertilise at the same time. They may sulk over the colder months but once the sun comes out they spring back into life and colour.



### Mandevilla Agathe Scarlet and Agathe White

The Agathe range of Mandevilleas are excellent in our conditions. They perform well in a hot spot in your garden or in a pot. They will climb up with the help of a little support, give them a pole or lattice work and watch it become a mass of large lush green foliage and big trumpet shaped flowers. Dead flowers fall to the ground and can easily be swept up so no pruning is required, just to prune to shape if growing too wide for your area.



### Mandevilla Tourmaline

The Tourmaline range of Mandevilleas are quite different. They will not send up any long climbing tendrils, instead they stay compact and very bushy column shaped. The leaves are still large green and the flowers very large trumpet shaped either pink or rose which is an elegant soft pink. Tourmaline range grow wonderful in pots and make a real statement in large pots either side of an entrance.





# Member Profile: Jong's Nursery



Jongs are highly regarded for the quality of the phalaenopsis they grow.

About halfway to Victor Harbor and just outside of Mount Compass is an unsuspecting little sign pointing the way to Jong's Nursery. The modest entrance is deceiving as three minutes down the gravel road sits an impressive nursery born from unwavering aspirations and professionalism.

Father and son, Nico and Peter Jong, migrated from Holland to start the nursery in 2009 after meeting with family in the Adelaide Hills who were running a smaller but successful gardening operation. Seeing promise in Adelaide, the family sold the nursery in their homeland and used the money to launch their business in Mount Compass.

The nursery is divided into three sections, the first is for processing seedlings, the second houses plants in later stages of development and the last is filled with plants ready for sale. The nursery is staffed by a small team of local residents and family members who have a clear passion for its success.

Peter says that while working with family means there is never a shortage of reliable workers, taking on outside workers is also valuable. "Having an outside perspective is important" he insists, contradicting the ethos of many smaller family-owned businesses that are often anxious to branch out. The nursery has grown exponentially and currently supplies plants to hundreds of customers both inside and outside the state. It took a while for the Jong family to get going though. "We ran at a loss for the first three years" Peter says, "but I was never worried, I always knew we were going to make it."

Peter attributes his calmness in the face of adversity to his time spent running the nursery back in Holland. He says the European market is generally more ahead of the curve as far as growing techniques and market trends are concerned, which gave him some bonus foresight into where the

Australian market was going to lean next.

Though their experience back home helped Nico and Peter stay positive during the rocky first years of the business, there was and is still much learning to be done. Back in Holland the family grew only two kinds of plants which were always in high demand, which is a far cry from the 70 different varieties they grow here in Adelaide.

The process of finding and growing the perfect plants for the market and climate of Adelaide is an ongoing one for Jong's nursery. "In the first year three quarters of our stock was put into compost and a quarter sold, then the next year half was composted and half

was sold, and so on" says Peter.

Peter says it's this process of trial and error and constant sacrifices and being frugal and conservative with your business in the early going that are vital.

"The one piece of advice I'd give to anyone starting up is to be prepared to not make money straight away and be mindful of cash flow which is important."

As for the future of the nursery, Peter says expansion isn't necessary as there is still plenty of room at their current location. Never ones to rest on their laurels though, Peter and Nico will continue to experiment with their plant range and continue to introduce new varieties to the marketplace.



Peter (l) and Nico Jong.



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