Wildflowers

BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

December 2015 – January 2016

WILDFLOWERS AUSTRALIA

In this issue:

'Walking on the wildside' gives insights

Held October 27 at Growwild wildflower farm, Alpine

All in all, the aim of introducing more people to the diversity and versatility offered by wildflowers and showing how they can be used in different ways and combined with traditional flowers was more than achieved by this event!

Feedback from participants strongly supports the value of hosting such events to increase knowledge of wildflowers and how to use them, and to enhance relationships between florists, floral artists, consumers and growers. Most were interested in attending another floristry demonstration focussed on wildflowers, preferably in 2016.

What the florists said

As well as producing fifteen amazing pieces, the demonstrations by florists Michelle Collison (MC, from The Shady Fig) and Michelle Van Eimeren (MVE, from Affair with George) highlighted how they work, and what they like about working with flowers and foliage, and wildflowers in particular.

'It's such an indulgence to see what beautiful flowers Australia provides with Australian wildflowers' (MC).

'Brides say they don't like natives and proteas – so we have to educate them to like all flowers'. 'Natives can be soft, pretty and delicate' (MVE).

'I love the looseness of natives, the free form garden style look which is the current trend' (MC).

'I believe a bouquet should have two faces; I like to use a mirror when I'm working to see the other side' – it also helps the wedding photographer if the flowers look good from as many angles as possible' (MVE).

'I don't like to plan too much (when I'm working), (what I do) is driven by the shape of the products' (MVE).

'I always start with a frame of foliage – foliage is almost as important as the flowers – and if I like how the frame looks, I'll be happy with the end results' (MVE).

Florists Michelle Collison at left and Michelle Van Eimeren thoroughly enjoyed sharing their knowledge and expertise, while working with a stunning array of flower and foliage products.

The feedback

Having the chance to win one of the beautiful arrangements encouraged lots of the attendees to return their evaluation forms. These provided really interesting comments and insights, along with good suggestions for fine tuning a future event.

Who was there?

Similarly to the event held at TAFE SWSI Padstow last year, a high proportion of attendees were floristry students or florists at the beginning of their careers, a critical time to build awareness and confidence in using wildflowers.

Many were commercial florists and floral artists (16) and floristry students (9), most having been in the floristry industry a relatively short time (1 to 5 years).

The event also attracted many who simply love flowers, and/or native plants but aren't florists or growers, but are consumers (13), two flower growers and one flower marketer, along with a photographer.

Most had heard about the day directly from WFA, many others received information via their floristry school, floral art group or garden club, or from a friend or family member. So the grapevine worked well!

A high proportion of the attendees already use wildflowers in their businesses, but the percentage of the total flowers and foliages used accounted for by wildflowers varied from <10% (19% of participants), 10-20% (36%), 20-50% (26%) to over 50% (19%). Those who did use wildflowers thought their vase life was very good (75%) to good (25%).

The majority purchase flowers from the Sydney Flower Market (77%), while fewer (43%) also buy direct from growers (and 57% don't).

Those who **do not** use wildflowers, were invited to share their reasons:
'I feel that wildflowers are more masculine – for my use, sometimes the softness and colour range available in traditional flowers is preferred' – a flower lover.
'I'd like more information on postharvest use and care' – a floral artist.

Most enjoyed the farm walk very much and their feedback about 'one new thing' learnt from seeing how wildflowers are grown and prepared for market was a good insight.

What did they learn about growing?
Many took away information about how to prune grevilleas (one of the main crops at Growwild wildflower farm) and how important it is to prune to get good quality blooms. The day helped them realise that flower growing is labour intensive and hard work, with ongoing maintenance and problem solving required! Many were impressed by the scale of production and variety of species being grown and learnt that native flower crops need more water than they expected. They also learnt more about harvesting (and were impressed by the electric secateurs) and that picking at the right time is critical for long vase life.

How will people use wildflowers now?
Most attendees felt they would use wildflowers more in future, as a result of learning more about wildflowers and how to use them during the event.

'After today I will certainly be using them more. The variety and the way they were used (in the demonstration) highlights how gorgeous they are and how they can be incorporated with other flowers' – a commercial florist.
'It's been a really wonderful day, I just want to keep learning! Absolutely love Australian natives. Stunning arrangements!'

Attendees were also asked if they would like to receive more information about wildflower products, and if so, how would they prefer to get this. 36 said they would like more information. Preferred ways to get this information were interesting with several people suggesting multiple ways. Most preferred the information to be on a website (20), followed by a Facebook page (9) or email updates (8). WFA will be looking at ways to meet this demand.

New insights
Attendees were invited to share 'one new thing' learnt from the floristry demonstration. The many interesting answers have again given interesting insights (similar to those after the 2014 event), and I've grouped similar replies together:

Wildflowers can be versatile, gorgeous and mix well with other types of flowers: 11 replies.

'I learnt that there is a huge variety of wild and native flowers and how beautifully they present themselves in an arrangement, even mixed with traditional flowers'.
'The sheer variety of wildflowers in terms of shapes, textures and colours'.
How relaxed wildflowers can look in flowing, loose and free form arrangements that are not structured - 4 replies.
'Amazing use of flowers – different shapes and levels in arrangements' – 2 replies.
'Never knew there were so many natives! So soft and colourful.'
How easily you can mix natives/wildflowers and non natives - 4 replies.
'Colour contrast and selection of materials was amazing and inspiring'.
I will use more foliage; there's lots of different greenery to use in arrangements – 3 replies


Michelle Collison completing her soft bridal bouquet featuring pink roses, flannel flowers, *Ixodia*, nigella, and wild grasses. She would use the *Ixodia* and nigella in the bride's hairpiece.

Florists attending singled out a few techniques that resonated with them:
Using water in containers, rather than floral foam.
The 'cage hold' – a technique demonstrated by Michelle Van Eimeren for making bouquets – was something they wanted to try (she made it look easy, but it isn't).
Doing a hand held bouquet with foliage first and then inserting flowers.
Using chicken wire instead of floral foam to support the arrangement.
They were also intrigued by the neckpiece and hat/fascinator made by Michelle Van Eimeren using flowers and plant materials.

Stand out products
Attendees also had the opportunity to nominate a wildflower product that specifically caught their attention on the day. While many

were dazzled by the great variety of wildflowers and 'new to them products' on show, particular products stood out.

These were the lilac kangaroo paws (7 comments), Mulla mulla (Ptilotus)(4), and smokebush (*Cotinus* sp), an exotic product (4). Others were orange kangaroo paws, *Baeckia*, red flowering gum, *Eucalyptus pyriformis* nuts, wattle (foliage), flannel flower, pink Verticordia, *Ixodia* daisy, Proteas, woolly bush, *Grevillea eriobotrya*, *Leucadendrons* including *Leucadendron discolour*, waratahs, and *Agonis* ('After Dark'). East Coast Wildflowers had also provided two 'special' products available only in small quantities - *Hakea Victoria* and *Lawrencia helmsii* (nicknamed 'flower dreadlocks' because of its appearance, it's wildharvested under license).

The relaxed bridal bouquet by Michelle Van Eimeren where she 'allows foliages to be the stars'. Magenta cosmos, pink David Austen roses, king proteas, *Serruria*, lilac kangaroo paws and *Banksia plagiocarpa* cones set off with *Agonis* 'After Dark' and purple Acacia baileyana foliage along with *Cotinus* (smokebush).

As reported in the last newsletter, several winners in this year's national student floristry competition attended the day and were presented with their certificates. Here WFA President Ben McInnes congratulates Susan Senn, winner of category 1 of the 2015 Wildflowers Australia National Student Floristry Competition.

Photos of the event used in this newsletter were taken by Thomas Stewart, Thomas Stewart Photography. Sincere thanks to Thomas for permission to use his wonderful photos.

RIRDC R&D update

From 2015, wildflowers are included in the **New and Emerging Plant Industries Three-Year RD&E Plan (2015–2018)** which outlines the research, development and extension (RD&E) objectives for new, emerging and other core funded plant industries from January 2015 until June 2018.

New RD&E objectives have not been developed specifically for the Wildflowers and Native Plants industry. This is because RIRDC needs each industry it supports to determine its direction and then figure out how it wants to get there, by consulting widely with its members to determine the highest industry priorities. That is the goal for the wildflower industry in 2016. For now, RIRDC is supporting four projects between 2015 and 2018 which are creating new plant types and a providing communications to deliver the outputs from previous RIRDC research projects.

Below are the links to these **current wildflower projects** –
Somatic fusion within the Haemodoraceae - http://www.rirdc.gov.au/research-project-details/custr10_NPP/PRJ-008850

Tissue culture and deflasking protocols for grevillea - http://www.rirdc.gov.au/research-project-details/custr10_NPP/PRJ-009597

Advanced biotechnology systems for propagation and breeding of Australian plants - http://wwwrirdc.gov.au/research-project-details/custr10_NPP/PRJ-009978

Capacity Building and Communications for the Wildflower Industry stage 2 - http://www.rirdc.gov.au/research-project-details/custr10_NPP/PRJ-009045

You will also find it interesting to review the current projects supported by the New and Emerging Plant Industries program – http://www.rirdc.gov.au/research-programs/plant-industries/new-and-emerging-plant-industries as some have current or potential application to wildflowers.

What project was that?

Looking for the results of completed R&D projects? Or do you want to know what projects have been funded and completed?

For your convenience, the WFA website has charts giving details of current and completed projects. Between 2000 and 2013, these were

funded under the RIRDC Wildflowers and Native Plants R&D Plans (2000-2005 and 2008-2013) and since 2014 under the New and Emerging Plant Industries Program.

Projects have been sorted into groupings relevant to growers, plant breeders and growers, florists and other industry supply chain members. The aim is to increase awareness and adoption of this information, otherwise there's no point in doing the projects! Each chart has links to final reports and any other publications to help you find out more.

All the charts were updated in late 2015.

The charts cover:
Crop production and management
Enhanced market position and profitability
Improving the quality of wildflower products
Industry publications developed by projects
Projects aimed at creating an updated product range and mix
Projects on waxflower
Projects related to floristry

You can get the complete picture of all the projects and how they fit together in the chart 'Completed projects sorted according to R&D plan objectives and goals'.

Find them at:
http://www.wildflowersaustralia.com.au/for-growers-and-value-chain-members/wildflower-r-d-information/-r-d-project-summaries-and-links-completed-projects-and-projects-underway

Nuffield scholarship for Emily Rigby

Congratulations to Emily Rigby, from the WFA member Cedar Hill Group, on receiving a Nuffield scholarship supported by Horticulture Innovation Australia and the Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation.

The Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship program provides an opportunity for young farmers to learn from their global counterparts by offering scholarships focused on agricultural research and innovation. 24 scholarships were awarded for 2016.

Emily will study greenhouse production systems specifically for sub-tropical climates, with a focus on low and high-technology protected cropping. Her scholarship research will take her to China, Israel, Kenya, Spain, Turkey and the US. Her aim is to achieve better production efficiencies, yields and sustainability. She wants to focus on the potential for under-utilised plant species, such as Australian natives, bush foods, niche plants, high-value plants and new ornamentals.

Emily is the research manager for Cedar Hill Flowers & Foliage, one of Australia's biggest exporters of cut foliage and flowers. Cedar Hill produces and processes products for floriculture markets in eastern and western Europe, the Americas, New Zealand, Asia, Japan and China.

Emily manages the company's umbrella fern plantations on the Sunshine Coast and in the Mary Valley and has researched the successful domestication of this Australian native foliage crop. Cedar Hill was the first to successfully propagate and artificially cultivate umbrella fern. Emily reported on this research at the Perth conference and her efforts contributed to her selection as a Queensland Finalist of the National RIRDC Rural Women's Award this year

On their return to Australia, scholars are expected to spread the knowledge and understanding they have gained among their fellow farmers and communities. So, expect to hear a lot more from Emily.

For more information about the Nuffield Scholarship visit www.nuffield.com.au
This information has been adapted from
http://nuffield.com.au/emily-rigby-2016-scholarship-winner/

Australian Flower Industry
The Magazine for the Australian Cut Flower & Foliage Industry

In 2016, *Australian Flower Industry* magazine will be published every two months, growing from from four issues to six issues per year. This is in response to industry feedback that people want to get industry news more often. While each issue will be more streamlined, you'll still receive the same number of pages of relevant, targeted industry information, distributed more evenly over the course of the year.

Australian Flower Industry magazine will now be

distributed in February, April, June, August, October and December. Subscription prices will remain the same and current subscribers (including WFA members) will receive the two extra issues as a matter of course before being reminded to renew their subscription.

Postharvest dip permit renewed

As a result of action taken by the WFA Board on behalf of the industry, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has issued (renewed) the following permit:
PER12785: Deltamethrin & Iprodione / Cut flowers for export / Quarantine pests and diseases
Permit issued 7 April 2011 and expires 30 June 2021.

WFA engaged AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd to manage the application process and paid the required fees, a good example of WFA taking a leadership role to benefit the wildflower industry as a whole.

This is a renewal permit, issued for all states. No additional data was required by the APVMA. The permit holder is WildFlowers Australia Ltd, c/- AgAware.

The permit is available on the APVMA website and also on the WFA website in the Members only section.

PASE Vapormate trials begin soon

You may recall that this time last year this newsletter reported on preliminary trials to assess the suitability of BOC Gas' product Vapormate® for fumigation of cut flowers and foliage. These were conducted by Emily Rigby from Cedar Hill Flowers and Foliage.

Vapormate® is a fast acting, broad spectrum fumigant with non-ozone depleting active ingredient ethyl formate.

The initial results produced no evidence of phytotoxic effects on the majority of cut flower and foliage products tested at the low dose (30g/m^3 Vapormate®) treatment for a duration of 2 hours. However, they indicated that more comprehensive trials would be needed, and on a larger range of wildflower products.

Emily's efforts to secure funding for these trials have now met with success! A grant has been provided as part of the Package Assisting Small Exporters (PASE) program to fund the project '**Improved export market access for Australian Wildflowers through disinfestation with Vapormate'**.

The grant will fund trials that will assess and report on both the phytotoxic effects and efficacy (effects on insect mortality) of Vapormate® for fumigation of Australian cut flowers and foliage to improve export market access.

The main activities supported by this funding agreement are:
> to complete a two stage trial of Vapormate® on up to 12 key Australian wildflower export products to assess and report on its viability as a successful method of insect pest disinfestation
> to provide the documented findings of the trial in a final report.

In the trials, Vapormate® will be compared with the current insecticide/fungicide dip used by Cedar Hill Flowers and Foliage as described in PER12785 (see previous item in this newsletter).

The photos above show some of the results obtained in the preliminary trials conducted in 2014. In yellow kangaroo paws (*Anigozanthos* 'Bush Matilda'), phytotoxic effects from the high Vapormate® dose can be seen in the flowers on the right, when compared to control flowers in the left photo. Treated flowers were slightly dried, discoloured and limp.

While the dip using deltamethrin + iprodione + wetting agent does result in high rates of insect mortality and no phytotoxic effects on most of the products treated, it is not 100% reliable. Some wildflower products do suffer damage and colour leaching may occur in dyed products. Another benefit of replacing this method is to limit exposure of dipping and processing staff to the dip chemicals and to reduce environmental risks and costs associated with the correct disposal of the spent dipping solution.

Trial set-up will be complete at the end of January with the first trials beginning in February.

If you are interested in including your products in trials as they are seasonably available, please contact Emily directly. While it is expected that all product for trials will be donated, freight of product to Cedar Hill Flowers and Foliage at Woombye, Qld can be reimbursed if necessary. The second stage of trials will be conducted later in the year when more products are seasonally available.

Please contact Emily Rigby (Research Manager, Cedar Hill Flowers & Foliage) at EmilyR@cedarhill.com.au or (07) 5442 3055.

The background – why other flower fumigants are not being considered.

Most fumigants have occupational health and safety considerations associated with their use and some may only be used by licensed operators.

- Use of methyl bromide is currently being phased out due to its listing as an ozone depleting substance under the Montreal Protocol. Phytotoxic affects are also a key issue.
- Insectigas-D® (aerosol) containing dichlorvos as an active ingredient is not registered as a postharvest fumigant for cut flowers. There is only an approved use pattern for non-food greenhouse crops.
- While phosphine has a use pattern covering cut flowers, a long treatment time of 15 hours at 15 ◦C may adversely affect subsequent vase life. In addition, there are reports that it may not kill all insect pests in cut flowers (particularly egg and pupal stages). Some insect pests have shown a high tolerance to phosphine.
- Cyanogens, carbon disulphide, hydrogen cyanide and metham sodium have been trialled previously as flower fumigants. Their use has resulted in a significant reduction in vase life of flowers and therefore they are unsuitable for flower disinfestation. In any case, they are not registered for postharvest use on cut flowers.

New RIRDC project to assist with pesticide information – your input needed!

This project supports small and non-levied industries, including the wildflower industry, with appropriate pesticide information and advice to address existing and future disease, insect or weed problems. Funded through the New and Emerging Plant Industries Program, the project commenced last October and runs until July 2017.

AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd has been contracted to manage this project (PRJ-010111 - Minor Chemical Consultant for small and non-levied industries).

Challenges currently faced by many small industries, including wildflowers, in regard to pesticides include:

• It's often hard to know what products are registered for certain pests and diseases, and there may be none
• There is limited knowledge of how to access permits
• There are limited funds to improve access
• There is no forum to voice industry needs
• There is poor access to agricultural chemical manufacturers for support
• A lack of cohesion within the industry itself makes exchange of information difficult.

This project aims to help industry deal with the challenges above by educating and assisting RIRDC identified new, emerging and small industries to source appropriate pesticides to manage a range of plant diseases, insects and weeds.

What this project will do

- Engage with the wildflower industry and respond to queries regarding the APVMA and the minor use permit system.
- Assist our industry to understand pesticide regulatory guidelines, regulations, product information, use patterns, registration and permit processes and the collection of data.
- Assist our industry to maximise production with effective use of appropriate pesticides and other pest control options.
- Assist our industry to develop a pesticide prioritisation list.
- Assist our industry to engage and collaborate with other Research and Development Corporations on pesticide projects.
- Assist our industry to prioritise their pesticide requirements to submit to the AgVet Chemicals Collaborative Forum grant scheme to ensure a collaborative approach to pesticide access.
- Assist our industry to effectively respond to an emergency pest situation.

Background

The project builds on an earlier one supported by RIRDC through New Rural Industries Australia during 2011 and 2012.

It was great that many wildflower growers got involved back then, responding to surveys to identify chemicals useful for managing pests, diseases and weeds affecting wildflower crops.

At the time, many product labels did not include a wildflower or ornamental plant use

pattern (and they still don't), making their use illegal in some states. The project was able to gain access to a number of products through new minor use permits covering several small industries. One example was PER13703 permitting use of bifenthrin (e.g. Talstar®) against spiders, heliothis and helicoverpa on wildflowers.

Other permits obtained via this project have already expired, and others will expire in 2017. It's possible that some chemicals flagged by the earlier project never even reached the permit stage, for example if the use was specific for wildflowers (and no other small industries) or too broad spectrum.

So, let's start right now to make the most of the opportunities this project offers.

How you can get involved

Very soon, I'll be sending out an industry survey to short list the current wildflower crop pest management issues and options available to control these pests. From this, AgAware will develop an 'industry-pest management snapshot'.

What is needed from you?

The information Agaware needs is as follows:

1. What are the key plant pests (diseases, insects, nematodes, weeds, etc) encountered in the production of wildflowers?
2. What are the key pesticides (fungicides, insecticides, nematicides, herbicides, etc) used to control these plant pests in wildflowers?
3. Are there any new or developing plant pests that will be a future threat to the production of wildflowers?
4. Are any alternative pesticides required by the wildflowers industry to control current or developing plant pests, i.e. are there any gaps?
5. Are any non-pesticide pest management alternatives practiced by the wildflower industry, e.g. predatory insects, pheromones, sterile insect technique, etc?

Given the wide range of species in the wildflower industry, we will have to focus on only key and representative crops as an initial step. Another way to focus the effort is to 'batch' similar crops together (ones likely to have the same pest and disease management issues). For example, all Proteas, Leucadendrons etc together as a group, all Banksias etc., kangaroo paws…

The answers to these questions have to be tabulated no later than 24 January 2016.

Many crops are affected by scale insects. The survey will help identify which crops are commonly affected and what chemicals growers use, and if they are the most appropriate choice. The resulting 'spray guide' will help growers choose the most effective and registered option.

We'll get a 'spray guide'

From that information, AgAware will prepare a list of registered and permitted pesticides available to the wildflower industry in Australia. You can use this as a 'spray guide'. This is a first!

Are there any gaps?

From the information provided in the 'industry-pest management snapshot' and the list of registered and permitted pesticides available, AgAware can provide an overview of the 'strength' of the pest management options practiced/available to the wildflower industry.

This will also determine if there are any pest management 'gaps' that need to be addressed.

Until you have a list of registered and permitted pesticides available for the main crops, you can't clearly see where there may be gaps. One question to consider is whether recent removal of fenthion (e.g. Lebaycid®), and the current review of omethoate (e.g. Folimat®) mean there are insufficient products registered for certain pests.

It is these pest management 'gaps' that AgAware will be concentrating on solving for our industry.

So look out for the survey. And, as you manage pests, diseases and weeds in your crops over the summer, check the labels on the products you are using. Do they include 'flowers' or 'ornamentals'? Do they include the pest, disease or weed you are targeting? If they don't, then they could be candidates for a new minor use permit. And make a note if there have been quarantine interceptions affecting your exported products. Or if you have difficulty

managing certain pests or diseases pre harvest?

Other information provided
In the next few months, AgAware will be able to provide our industry with a document 'Access to pesticides - An explanation for minor industries' that sets out:
Sources of the latest pesticide registrations and permits.
Information on the APVMA Minor-use Permit System as an avenue for farmers/industries to access unregistered pesticides.
Information on the procedures and data required when applying for a minor-use permit.
Information on the AgVet Chemicals Collaborative Forum and the option to co-fund data generation projects for specific crops.

Fenthion withdrawn from use

Fenthion, a broad spectrum insecticide, has been withdrawn by the APVMA due to risks to human health and the environment, effective 30 October 2015.

Fenthion is a broad-spectrum organophosphorus insecticide which was used to control insect pests in agricultural, commercial and domestic situations and external parasites on cattle. Fenthion was previously used as a quarantine treatment option for export of products that were at risk of spreading fruit fly. It was also used to control pest birds in and around buildings. Growers may be more familiar with trade names of products including fenthion, such as Lebaycid Insecticide Spray®.

Following the completion of the review of fenthion in October 2014, all active approvals and product registrations were cancelled. The phase out period has now ended, meaning that products containing fenthion may no longer be used or supplied.

If you still have products containing fenthion, please dispose of them responsibly. You can use a licensed waste disposal contractor or facility, such as Chemclear, the industry run stewardship program for the disposal of pesticides - phone: 1800 008 182 or register online at chemclear.com.au

Omethoate under review

The APVMA review of the chemical omethoate (e.g. FoliMat® and LeMat®) is now underway.

At present, omethoate 800 g/L products may be used on fruits, vegetables, carnations, chrysanthemums, pelargoniums, roses, callistemons, Eucalyptus spp., Grevillea spp., paperbarks and wattles. Omethoate 290 g/L products are registered for use on pastures, cereals, and poppies. The pests controlled, include mites, aphids, thrips and jassids.

The date for review completion is November 2016: the APVMAs workplan is available from the second paragraph of the omethoate review webpage
http://apvma.gov.au/node/12661

The assessment of Occupational Health and Safety has been completed and published on the APVMA website
http://apvma.gov.au/node/12661 . The Health Department recommended that the APVMA cannot be satisfied that the use of omethoate according to its existing label directions will not be a risk to workers and also recommended:

- that the application of 800 g/L omethoate products by airblast equipment, equipment carried on the back of the user, or by aerial application to eucalypts should no longer be allowed
- amended and new safety directions including personal protection equipment
- new and amended re-entry periods for all crops.

WFA endorses cut flower biosecurity plan

The WFA board endorsed this Plan in early December 2015.

Finalising this plan is a huge achievement, especially the extensive and detailed threat summary tables for the 10 selected flower crops, including waxflower.

This was only possible because of the commitment of plant pathologists and entomologists working in state and federal departments of agriculture, who searched the literature for the information - as none of them are working in flower R&D these days. It was also critical to have the input of several flower industry members. Those who travel overseas regularly were able to confirm the often devastating impact of certain pests or diseases on certain flower crops overseas or were able to get additional information from their overseas contacts.

Should wildflower growers be interested in biosecurity? Yes! Myrtle rust is an example of an exotic disease that managed to enter Australia and become established here, affecting a range of susceptible host crops. While Australia has been importing a range of traditional, orchid and tropical cut flower and foliage products to satisfy market demand for many years, wildflower species are now also imported from overseas producers. These include kangaroo paws and billy buttons. To date the verdict has been that such imports are of poorer quality than the Australian grown equivalent, and that they are mainly imported at times when local product is in short supply.

This represents potential opportunities and threats - opportunities for local growers to increase production to ensure local demand is satisfied; threats of importing exotic pests which may damage local production.

WIN news

The Wildflower Industry Network of NSW Inc. (WIN) is an association member of WFA. Regular meetings and farm walks allow industry members to meet, compare notes and learn from each other. The photo above was taken during the most recent meeting and farm walk, held at Craig Scott's farm at Somersby, NSW. The farm walk gave attendees an opportunity to see how several crops were performing on the new plantation site, including *Agonis* 'After Dark', waratahs and flowering gums.

You'll find details of the next WIN meeting and Craig Scott's report market on sales and trends in the Sydney Flower Market in the latest WIN newsletter – go to http://www.wildflowersaustralia.com.au/for-growers-and-value-chain-members/newsletters/win-newsletters-nsw-

Exporting – some food for thought

How do other horticultural exporters around the world achieve success? What can Australia learn from this? Go to http://www.farmweekly.com.au/news/agriculture/agribusiness/general-news/exporters-served-some-home-truths/2749363.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter

Perth conference proceedings published

The International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) has now published the proceedings as an Acta Horticulturae. All conference delegates received their copy by post just before Christmas. There are 34 articles over 264 pages.

If you missed the conference, which included the VIII International Symposium on New Ornamental Crops and the XII International Protea Research Symposium, you can order your copy via this link http://www.ishs.org/ishs-book/1097
If you are a current ISHS member, you can also download individual papers directly from the website.

Feature flower: Scholtzia

Botanical name: *Scholtzia involucrata*

Origin: coastal areas to the north and south of Perth, WA.

Description: An attractive filler product with slender stems bearing clusters of soft pink flowers at the tips of the current season's growth. White forms are also available. Florists prefer selections with an upright habit, long arching stems, clear, strong flower colours, densely massed flowers and attractive foliage.

Each flower cluster is 10–15 cm long, and comprises tiny 5-petalled flowers (each 6–8 mm across) which are held in groups of 3–5 on short stems. Pink in bud, the flowers continue to open after harvest and darken with age. Flowers open first at the base of the flowering stem.

Scholtzia can be substituted for waxflower, being available at the end of the wax season, and has similar postharvest handling requirements.

Bush-harvested product competes with cultivated *Scholtzia*.

Cultivation notes:
An upright shrub to 2 m tall, Scholtzia prefers coarse, well-drained sandy soils. Plants tolerate hot and dry summer conditions, but summer irrigation is required to maximise growth. In the heat of summer, flowers tend to fade rapidly in the sun.

Keep plants well irrigated and fertilised during spring to maximise stem length at harvest time. Minimise bypass growth at the stem tips through careful management of crop nutrition in the lead-up to flowering.

Plants are susceptible to root rot diseases caused by *Pythium* and *Phytophthora*.

Growing several *Scholtzia* species provides product for over 9 months of the year. These include *Scholtzia capitata*, *S. oligandra* and *S. spathulata* (flowering in May to August).

Flowering season: Early November to February.

Typical vase life: 7 to 12 days.

Sold in bunches: Size according to market demand, but typically 350 g per bunch. Stem lengths typically 70, 60 and 50 cm.

When to harvest:
As they mature, flowering stems bear a range of flowers of different maturities, ranging from youngest at the top to oldest at the base. For optimum quality, pick stems with 30%–50% of flowers open at the base.

Avoid stems with significant bypass growth beyond the flower masses.

Effective cooling soon after harvest is important to retain quality and maximise vase life. Hold in clean potable water, preferably with an added registered biocide. To increase water uptake and improve hydration it may be worth holding the stems in deep water (e.g. 20 cm) or in special hydrating solutions such as commercial solutions, citric acid or wetting agents (see *Postharvest Manual** for details).

Tips for florists:
Look for bunches with crisp, fresh green foliage. Avoid those with significant bypass growth (it will cost you to trim them back), dropping flowers or where more than 30% of flowers are over-mature (closed and drying).

Recut stems and place into fresh water containing a registered biocide. To increase water uptake and improve hydration it may be worth holding the stems in deep water (e.g. 20 cm). Do not mist the flowers.

Ethylene susceptibility:
Scholtzia involucrata is not ethylene sensitive, but other *Scholtzia* species may be. Growers are advised to conduct trials with a commercial anti-ethylene silver solution.

Adapted with acknowledgement from the Australian Wildflower Quality Specification for 'Scholtzia', November 2010. Available to download or purchase at https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/items/10-055
*The Postharvest Manual is the manual 'Postharvest Handling of Australian Flowers from Australian Native Plants and Related Species', 2nd edition, 2010. ISBN 978-1-74254-000-9. RIRDC Publication No.10/027.
Photo courtesy of Lowan Turton and NSW DPI.

Events 2016

January 24 (Sunday), at 3 pm. Talk at Sea Acres Rainforest Centre Theatre, Port Macquarie, NSW
'Christmas Bells near Port Macquarie: Pollination, Conservation and Fire Ecology'.
Presentation by Dr Graham Pyke (Distinguished Professor, School of Life Sciences, UTS; and partner with Prof Paul Ehrlich's Stanford based Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere).

There is no charge but a gold coin donation would be appreciated.

RSVP: by Friday Jan 22 2016, to Amanda Boardman (Acting Manager, Sea Acres Rainforest Centre, NPWS Customer Experience Division); phone: 02 65823355; fax: 02 65822930.

February 15-17
Nursery & Garden Industry National Conference.
Theme: 'Share the vision – the road ahead'.
Adelaide.
Early bird registrations close on January 16.
Details:
http://www.ngia.com.au/www.ngia.com.au/Folder?Action=View%20File&Folder_id=183&File=4page_brochure_FINAL_V3_web.pdf

February 20
WIN AGM and farm visit
Venue: Property of Gordon and Carol Meiklejohn, The Oaks, NSW.
Guest speaker: Dr Robyn McConchie, who will give an update on the waratah flowering project.
Details: Frank Allatt (fallatt@bigpond.net.au)

Program:
10.30am - Arrive – tea /coffee provided
11.00am - AGM and General Meting
12.30pm - Lunch - please bring your own.
1.30pm - Farm walk
3.30pm - Afternoon Tea

March 14-16
National Seed Science Forum.
Venue: The Australian PlantBank
Hosted by The Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan, in collaboration with the Australian Network for Plant Conservation and the Australian Grains Genebank.

The draft scientific program can be downloaded from the following link:
http://www.seedpartnership.org.au/seedscienceforum/program

There is an exciting line-up of Australian and international keynote speakers, research presentations, panel discussions, and poster and rapid fire presentations. The Program also includes presentations by early career researchers showcasing their work.

Forum registrations close on 29 February 2016.

June 8
Inaugural Agri Investor Australia Forum 2016
Grand Hyatt, Melbourne.
This forum will gather leading investors, agricultural operators and government advisors for a pivotal discussion on the next phase of investment in one of the world's fastest growing alternative.

Key themes for the 2016 forum:
• Where is foreign capital going?
• Australia and its agri relations with China and North Asia
• Investing in Beef and Dairy sectors
• Prospects for investing in agribusiness
• Capitalsing on innovation in agri
• Case studies on how to access the sector across the value chain

For more information on this event, contact Andrew Wolff at andrew.w@peimedia.com

October 12-14
IFEX – Japan's largest flower industry trade show.
Venue: Makuhari Messe, Japan.
The show gathers key buyers from all over the world and is the 'must attend' show for all flower industry professionals. At IFEX you can take orders from importers, find local agents and distributors, meet growers and carry out market research focusing on Japan and Asia.
For full details, see the website:
http://www.ifex.jp/en/

And some stats from IFEX 2015:
Number of exhibitors: 1488 including those attending concurrent shows.

Exhibitors came from following 25 countries and regions: Canada, China, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, UK and USA.

Number of visitors who attended: 38,820 (all professionals).

For more details about the statistics go to >>
http://www.ifex.jp/en/doc/TAC/

The post show report is available at
http://www.ifex.jp/en/doc/postshowreport/

How to contact WFA

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