

Malcolm's Comment

OUR GROWING LIST OF NATIVES

Readers will notice a sizable number of natives appearing in this newsletter and indeed in our stock list and might be wondering why this is happening. There are in fact a number of reasons. Colourwise has always been noted for growing new release plants and with the growing strength and output of local plant breeders, more of the new plants coming onto the market are Australian natives. We are regularly approached by breeders and marketers to grow their new release natives because of our growing expertise and our ability to market them through garden centres. Of course we don't choose to grow all the new ones that we are offered. Unlike specialist native plant growers we are able to choose only the best and those that we can grow well. This means you can be assured that every native we offer will be a good one, such as *Lomandra* 'Seascape' and the two *Acmenas* in this newsletter.

Additionally, natives generally suit the current trend to drought tolerant and low maintenance (not no maintenance) gardening, and are being used increasingly by landscapers and designers. This group particularly are pleased to see us increase the range we offer. *Chrysocephalum* 'Desert Flame', *Ozothamnus* 'Radiance', *Scaevola* 'Aussie Salute' and *Viola hederacea* 'Aussie Carpet' are our best sellers. So if you would like to increase your stock of natives, then order a selection from us that you can be confident of.

New Releases



Attention
LANDSCAPERS

■ *Lomandra confertifolia* spp *rubiginosa* 'Silver Grace'

A new selection of *Lomandra* with beautiful graceful silvery grey foliage and plumes of fragrant yellow flowers throughout the summer months. Being a true blue native, this selection will withstand huge variances in temperature (-3° to 40°). An excellent choice for low maintenance landscapes and just as suitable for decorative pots in a courtyard. Plants develop to 50 x 40cm and prefer a well drained soil.

Available in 140mm pots in March

High resolution images available

■ *Chamelaucium uncinatum* 'Jewel' & 'Mist'



Geraldton Wax is one of Australia's most famous wild-flowers and is widely used as a cut flower in Australia and overseas. The flowers last for well over a week when

cut. 'Jewel' and 'Mist' are two new and distinct varieties. Both are erect plants with a higher than normal branching density, producing numerous gracefully weeping secondary stems. They bloom heavily in winter, with unusually large flowers with a wide range of eye colour from yellow-green when immature to grey-purple when mature. Petal colours also vary from near white to red-purple and purple. Plants require good drainage and an open sunny position. They will tolerate coastal locations and sandy soils.

Available in 140mm pots in late autumn

High resolution images available



LIMITED
STOCK

■ *Torenia Catalina*™ 'Viva Sol'

A plant that grows and flowers well in the shade is a must-have for many gardeners. So take a look at this one. Overseas the Catalina Torenias have proven to be superior to the other varieties on the market. They are more compact, forming a fast growing but low mound 20 x 30 cm with controlled growth, unlike the rampant nature of other Torenias. Viva Sol, the first Catalina on the



market here, bears bright yellow flowers with a vibrant purple throat, and blooms for a long period, lasting 12 months in warm locations like Brisbane if helped by the occasional light trim. Torenias are at their best in semi-shade, can be used in pots or hanging baskets and are also suited to garden beds.

Available in 140mm pots in now

High resolution images available

New Releases Cont'd

■ *Cosmos astrosanguineus* 'Choca Mocha'



A chocolate lover's dream, chocolate scented flowers! Dark maroon-brown, sometimes almost black, velvety flowers on long, slender, reddish brown stems bloom from early summer into autumn. Chocolate cosmos is a tender tuberous perennial native to Mexico that will overwinter in mild areas. It is more compact and has improved vigour over its predecessor that appeared a few years back. Grow grouped in a border or in containers

where the flowers can be a conversation piece. They also make fantastic cut flowers. Grow in full sun and mulch the base over winter to protect from frost.

Available in 140mm pots in late autumn

High resolution images available

What's Hot

■ *Nandina domestica* 'Gulf Stream'



A fantastic form of the Japanese Sacred Bamboo, 'Gulf Stream' has been in short supply over the last 12 months due to a propagation shortage, but finally we are back into the swing of things! Graceful, bamboo-like foliage colours to beautiful orange and scarlet tones in the cooler months of the year. Maturing to a plant approx 75 x 50cm 'Gulf Stream' is smaller than the species but slightly

taller than the dwarf form 'Nana'. Suited to mass planting, street landscapes, low hedging or as an understory plant 'Gulf Stream' is hardy, easy-care and virtually indestructible.

Available in 200mm pots now

High resolution images available

New to Colourwise

Attention
LANDSCAPERS

■ *Lomandra confertifolia* spp. *rubiginosa* 'Seascape'



Lomandra 'Seascape', with its graceful, weeping blue-grey foliage has been an ultra popular plant in recent years and we are pleased to now be able to offer it. It bears highly fragrant flowers in summer, is extremely frost hardy and drought tolerant, non-invasive and easy to maintain. 'Seascape' is ideal for patio pots, rockeries and border perimeters, paths and retaining

walls to create a softening effect by covering harsh edges. Grows to 50 x 75cm in full sun or part shade and is frost hardy and drought tolerant.

Available in 140mm pots now

High resolution images available

■ *Acmena smithii* 'Minor' 'Cherry Surprise' & 'Sunrise'

Yes – we can hear you thinking – more "new" varieties of *Acmena* – what's so special about these? We were so impressed by the foliage colour of these two new selections that we decided to break our *Acmena* growing drought! The new growth of 'Cherry Surprise' is a stunning glossy burgundy red, while 'Sunrise', as the name suggests, flushes in shades of pink, yellow and apricot. Both plants are rapid growers and are best kept at 3m tall. They can be utilised as screening or as formal or informal hedging. They flush new growth throughout all seasons, will grow in a full sun or partly shaded environment, suit most free draining soil types and are drought tolerant once established.



Available in 140mm pots in February

High resolution images available

Business Notes 1

■ SELLING IN DIFFICULT TIMES

With the gloom and doom about the economy we could all be forgiven for being concerned about our own businesses. But we need to remind ourselves that whatever the state of the economy, businesses must go on regardless. It's time for a reality check to ensure that it isn't a self fulfilling prophecy to assume that since the economy is poor our business will suffer.

In difficult times it's critical to work smarter on your sales and marketing efforts, have a positive attitude and a focus on your customers. People are going to continue gardening - and shopping - and seeking gardening advice - whatever the economy is doing. It's already widely reported that people are travelling less, especially overseas. Did any of you notice the packed campsites everywhere this summer? That's good news for us. If they are at home, then they are more likely to spend time in the garden and to want to give themselves a treat. Furthermore, we are in a feel-good industry and your customers love to buy a new plant that they will enjoy or a new product that will help them in the garden. So make sure you invest in plants and products and services that will draw customers to you, and work harder on your efforts to get them there.

Tried & Tested

■ Aqua Plant – *Dracaena*



Our gift lines continue to prove popular at both garden centres and florist shops. The stylish plant and pot combinations are ideal for customers to purchase for personal

home décor or as gifts. As we have said before, the better you present these the more your customers will buy. *Dracaena marginata* are displayed in modern glass vases filled with coloured pebbles. Simple, but effective – an ideal gift, particularly for those looking for an indoor plant that needs minimum care. There is a medley of pretty leaf colours to enchant your customers.

Available in 100mm vases now

High resolution images available

■ Lucky Bamboo Taper Hearts



Lucky Bamboo has been very popular over the years with its different shapes and vases. Colourwise now has heart canes in stock and we have placed them in a taper vase with red pebbles to make a wonderful gift for Mum on Mothers Day or for a loved one for any occasion.

The best situation for Lucky Bamboo is indoors, in a light position away from draughts and direct sunlight. The water should be topped up once a week or more, and to help produce more green leafy growth use our Lucky Bamboo fertiliser. You will need to be quick as the canes will be selling fast.

Available in 190mm vases now

High resolution images available

Fantastic
Florists *for*

Tech Notes

■ MEASUREMENT MATTERS

At the recent NGIA conference Malcolm, together with Tim Pickles, gave a talk entitled “Measurement Matters”. Here is a summary of some of the critical points.

Every business needs to keep measuring and comparing themselves to industry standards. If you don’t do this you are likely to keep doing things in a particular way just because that’s how you’ve always done it rather than think about ideas and techniques to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

But don’t measure what you don’t want to change, or anything that is too complicated or that costs too much. Small businesses often try to measure too much and achieve nothing. You should start by choosing two or three key things (metrics in “business speak”) that will have the greatest impact on your business if you get it right. Tim explained that members of Garden Centre of Australia (GCA) are able to compare their monthly sales, average sales, customer numbers and wages to sales with over 25 retail nurseries.

Once you have your initial baseline measurements, your aim should be to measure them regularly to see if you have improved on them. Ideally you should benchmark your performance against industry standards. Unfortunately the last complete industry benchmarking study was in 2005 and the one currently being conducted by NGINA hasn’t had a great response, especially from retailers. So if you already have some data that you can contribute to the study please respond so that the entire industry can benefit. And if you have never done any measurement, now is the time to get started. You will see it can make a difference.

Business Notes 2

■ HELP US TO HELP YOU

Our previous Business Notes signposted that in difficult times we all need to work smarter and focus on providing the products and service that our customers want or need. We try to put that concept in practice ourselves and are always looking for ways to enhance our customer service. It’s no secret that a large percentage of our sales is now to Bunnings and other chains, and we make no apology for this as we too have to survive and grow. BUT we certainly don’t want to have all our eggs in one basket, so we are always looking at ways of improving our sales to independents. Whether you deal with our sales staff over the telephone or our van sales people, we would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions on ways that we can improve our service to you. We would also like to hear from you, whether you are a retailer or a landscaper, if there is a gap in our plant list in terms of products that are in short supply from others or that you would like to be able to source from us. To encourage you to reply we will provide a dinner for two at your favourite restaurant up to a value of \$250 for the best response we receive.

Sneak Previews

■ *Cleome* 'Señorita Rosalita'



This brand new *Cleome*, an absolutely stunning addition to our flowering plant range, is not to be missed. Bushy plants grow 70cm tall and are covered all over with soft lavender blooms throughout the warmer months. 'Señorita Rosalita' will not produce seed as other *Cleome* do which allows it to put its energy into producing more flowers! Having won a

host of awards in numerous overseas countries this will definitely be the BIG plant for spring 09! Place a forward order now to avoid the rush and ensure supply.

Available in 140mm pots in spring

High resolution images available

■ *Jasminum multipartitum* 'Southern Stars'

A hugely rewarding shrub developing large (40mm across) heavily scented white flowers from early spring through to summer. Buds emerge tinted pinkish red contrasting against the dark green glossy foliage. 'Southern Stars' is the ultimate border plant or hedge, growing to 1.5 m when mature. The plant is able to withstand some frost but in colder regions it will need a protected area.



Available in 140mm pots in spring

High resolution images available

■ *Callistemon* 'Hot Pink'



This entirely new variety of Australian bottlebrush has dazzling bright pink flowers, and will make an excellent garden or courtyard plant. 'Hot Pink' will grow to 1.5 to 2.0 m tall and bloom profusely with flowers that are irresistible to nectar-feeding birds and insects. Flowers develop late spring and continue into the summer months. Bred in South Africa and spotted by an Aussie nurseryman travelling there, we think the compactness

and the colour of this new form will make it a winner. Forward order to ensure supply.

Available in 140mm pots in spring

High resolution images available

■ *Cordyline australis* 'Renegade'

This new and distinctive *Cordyline* has a clumping form similar to 'Red Fountain' and grows to 80 cm tall with arching dark purple to nearly black foliage that has a glossy, lacquered finish. With its unusual colour and habit *Cordyline* 'Renegade' will make a great garden focal point or an excellent tub specimen. 'Renegade' tolerates light to moderate frosts and can withstand dry periods. Small fragrant pale purple flowers appear on delicate stems during the summer months.



Available in 175mm pots in spring

High resolution images available

Business Notes 3

■ NEW EMAIL COMMUNICATION

As one of our ways of working smarter we will soon launch our occasional email "newsmail" that will be sent between our regular newsletters. Look for it landing in your Inbox soon. Please help us to compile an accurate email database by completing the enclosed form and returning it in the enclosed SAE. Nominate yourself or anyone else you think could benefit from receiving it. You can also include your suggestions about improving our service or additions to our stock list. If you prefer you can of course email sales@colourwise.com with your responses.

