



**Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia**



**Know-how for Horticulture™*

**Final Report
HAL Project: NY08023
Completion Date: 31 July 2010**

NGIA Communications

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~ Disclaimer ~

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SUMMARY

Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) Communications project delivers comprehensive and timely communications via electronic and print periodicals to industry stakeholders and interested parties. The various vehicles used by NGIA combine to ensure that whole of industry is informed and kept up to date on matters relevant to the industry and levy funded initiatives. While information may be repeated across the range of formats, experience has shown that with such a diverse industry both in terms of engagement and structure, it is important that levy payers have access to the information in a variety of formats.

This project is intrinsically linked to all projects managed by NGIA. The key projects within Communication and PR ensure messages align with the Industry Strategic Plan, provide links with internal communication and obtain the data to be communicated to industry on trends and market changes. It is also linked to the environmental and technical projects which generate key data on relevant environmental issues and technical initiatives which need to be communicated to whole of industry. The extension network projects provide feedback and input into Nursery papers on technical issues and business improvement programs while Industry training & development initiatives such as new workshops, curriculum changes and outcomes of industry representation are also communicated through this project.

The Nursery & Garden Industry websites are the industry's one-stop shop for news, information and tools. During the course of this project the website was upgraded to a content managed system with a comprehensive database back-end. As a result, we have seen greater reliance by industry on this medium as the most up-to-date source of industry information.

The database component of the website has played a key role as the repository of contact details for the industry. It is continually updated to ensure details are both current and accurate. This database is used as "the industry" and segmented as required for the distribution of information for all levy projects.

During the life of this project NGIA Clippings was issued monthly and featured news stories about national projects and activities as well as matters of interest to industry members relevant to the national strategic plan. NGIA Nursery Papers were also issued monthly and covered technical, business and marketing topics.

NGIA Issue Alerts were produced as required to inform industry of matters of high priority and urgent attention such as quarantine and pest alerts. These were distributed via fax, email and also available on the NGIA website.

The use of the logo, LEVY FUNDED PROJECT, has helped industry in determining which projects are funded and which come as member benefits. NGIA will continue to emphasise those benefits/projects which are a result of levy to ensure value is being demonstrated.

The challenge with any communication strategy across such as diverse and multi-sector industry is getting the right information distributed, read and understood by the relevant parties. NGIA continues to review and modify its communication vehicles in terms of content, style, frequency and method of distribution to meet the needs of industry and its stakeholders. In the past two years we have moved to greater use of electronic communication for both cost and efficiency benefits. However as an industry we are slow to adopt technology so NGIA must continue to deliver our materials in a variety of formats while gently encouraging wider adoption of more cost effective and efficient methods of communication.

INTRODUCTION

The Australian NGI is a significant sector of the Australian horticultural industry employing over 45,000 people in 20,000 small to medium businesses and turning over \$6 billion annually. These businesses are located all over Australia resulting in extreme variations of growing conditions, types of plants produced and structure of businesses. Consequently the type and format of information required by businesses varies significantly

Industry communications was formerly incorporated into the Industry Partnership Agreement. The duration of this project was from November 2008 to July 2010 and it provided multimedia communication tools to convey outcomes from projects and updates on key issues to the whole of industry. Comprising a range of publications, NGIA communications were designed to deliver comprehensive and timely information in a format that suits each industry sector and businesses. These publications were supported by the nursery industry levy, which means any business in the Australian nursery and garden industry is eligible to subscribe free of charge.

The factors which contributed to the success of this project are:

- Ensuring all communications are interesting, easy to read, timely and relevant
- Tailored to an evolving audience profile
- Delivering the objectives outlined in the NGI Strategic Plan and specified sector groups
- Continually highlight the relevance and transference to industry businesses
- Increasing the promotion of the value of plants

The primary aims of the project were to:

- Provide timely and comprehensive communications via print and electronic communications
- Increase awareness among nursery and garden stakeholder (member and non-members) of projects and activities occurring at a national level
- Increase awareness among industry stakeholders of matters relevant to the industry and levy program
- Promote national industry programs and projects
- Assist with the ongoing development of industry stakeholders' technical, business and marketing expertise
- Provide to businesses and individuals in the nursery and garden industry, including landscapers and other key stakeholders:
 - Current news
 - In-depth technical, business and marketing resource
 - Information and updates on national projects, events, activities and other relevant industry matters
- Utilise the NGI database to coordinate and manage the details of business and individuals receiving NGI communications: facilitate the distribution of NGI communications in the format requested by the recipient – i.e. via email or post, Manage membership details, coordinate and manage details of businesses

participating in the accreditation programs and produce the annual NGI Trade register

NGIA is very aware of the diversity of needs within industry and is committed to assisting all businesses with the information required in the areas of technical expertise and knowledge, training and staff support, supply chain and business skills and effective communication of levy funded projects. The suite of communication tools developed as part of this project also combine to enable NGIA to communicate updates on outcomes from Across Industry Programs developed by HAL and other key organisations that interface with the NGI.

The range of vehicles included:

1. Websites

NGIA develops and supports several websites targeted at specific sectors and outcomes.

- The Industry website www.ngia.com.au focuses on communication to whole of industry including growers, retailers, allied providers, state association members and landscapers.
- The Consumer website www.lifeisagarden.com.au is designed to encourage all people to get into the garden and includes garden projects, event information and tips on things such as the wise use of water, attracting native birds into your garden and any promotions being undertaken by NGIA.
- The Industry Awards website www.ngiaevents.com.au/awards focuses on communication and promotion of the national industry awards program to whole of industry. This website is linked from NGIA's main website.
- The National Conference website www.ngiaevents.com.au/2010conference focuses on communication and promotion of the national conference to whole of industry including growers, retailers, allied providers, state association members and landscapers. This website is a link from NGIA's main website.
- The industry careers website www.greenlifecareers.com.au focuses on promoting the horticultural sector as a viable career path. It targets school leavers and mature aged people either returning to the workforce or looking for a change in career. This website is a link from NGIA's main website.

2. Technical Publications

The NGI produces **Nursery Papers** which cover technical, business and marketing topics, issue or projects and incorporate recommended strategies and actions for implementation by industry members. This publication aims to develop members' knowledge and expertise in areas that are relevant to their work in the industry. These publications are distributed as a hardcopy and available in PDF format on the NGIA website.

3. Industry Information

- I. **NGIA Clippings** is issued monthly and feature news stories about national projects and activities. It also covers matters of interest to industry members and relevant to the national strategic plan.
- II. **NGIA e-Commpost** was a monthly e-newsletter published alternate fortnights to Clippings addressing industry news briefs and providing a timelier vehicle in which to deliver relevant industry stories. A survey conducted in August 2009 revealed this publication was not valued by industry; consequently it was ceased in December 2009.

To facilitate the continued distribution industry relevant information, articles of interest and industry news updates were sent fortnightly to the state offices for

inclusion in their communication vehicles and support of Project NY09012 Regional Communications.

- III. **NGIA Issue Alerts** are produced as required for matters and issues that require the urgent or high priority attention of the industry.
- IV. **Garden Foodie e-newsletter** - this publication has been ceased due to the benefits not meeting expectations.

4. Industry Database

The NGI database plays a key role as the repository of contact details for the industry. It is continually updated to ensure details are both current and accurate.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Comprising a range of publications, our communications are designed to deliver comprehensive and timely information in a format that suits industry. These publications are supported by the nursery industry levy, which means any business in the Australian nursery and garden industry is eligible to subscribe free of charge.

NGIA is very aware of the diversity of needs within industry and is committed to assisting all businesses with the information required in the areas of technical expertise and knowledge, training and staff support, supply chain and business skills and effective communication of levy funded projects. The suite of communication tools developed as part of this project also combine to enable NGIA to communicate updates on outcomes from Across Industry Programs developed by HAL and other key organisations that interface with the NGI.

Industry websites

NGIA

Launched in 2009, the new and improved NGIA website is user-friendly, succinct and has a modern, industry appropriate design. The Nursery & Garden Industry website contains a wealth of resources to benefit industry members.

Key areas on the website include:

- Marketing and environmental promotions such as Life is a garden and Grow Me Instead
- Training & Recognition – Available and upcoming workshops and courses, information on Certified Nursery Professional (CNP) Business Improvement – Accreditation for garden centres, production nurseries and growing media suppliers
- Publications and Resources – Free downloadable publications such as Clippings & Nursery Papers plus publications available for purchase
- Environmental initiatives for dealing with issues such as climate change and biosecurity

The NGIA websites are continually being modified, updated and new pages added to ensure industry is kept informed.

In the last six months some of the changes/updates have included:

- News Section – updated fortnightly with media releases
- Home Page – hot buttons modified to reflect events on linked websites
- Home Page – Inclusion of industry video on climate change and the benefits of Greenlife
- PR & Communications – changes made to reflect current campaigns
- Marketing – changes made to coincide with promotional activities, programs and outcomes
- Awards & Conference – modifications to reflect new Sponsors and program materials.
- Businesses Improvement & Accreditation – uploading of new FMS Program PDF's for distribution to growers
- Environment – Inclusion of all Productivity Submissions and Levy funded projects
- Events calendar – continually updated as new events come online

- New Pages Added:
 - Biosecurity
 - Supply Chain

NGI State Websites

To facilitate a more cohesive image across industry for all stakeholders and a single communication vehicle driven through a one database, state offices were offered the opportunity to align their websites with NGIA. This required the implementation of a similar platform developed by CyberGlue which enabled content management and cross linkages. This action resulted in all states being represented on the web. Western Australia, Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania are featured within the NGIA National site whereas NSW, Queensland and Victoria have developed their own sites. Funding for data consolidation was provided to facilitate this as there will be savings realised in the future. State websites can be viewed at www.ngia.com.au

Life is a garden website

The Life is a garden website www.lifeisagarden.com.au was revamped and re-launched in late 2009. This website is one of the vehicles through which the promotion of gardens and gardening is reinforced to the Australian media and public. Directing users to their local garden centre for inspiration, advice and products, this colourful site contains information and inspiration for both new and dedicated gardeners.

NGI Awards Website

The NGI Awards website is changed each year with a new and vibrant design. The website is used as an information tool as well as a promotional tool – giving online exposure to both the Awards program and the State and National Award Winners

2010 was the first year that online entry was made possible, with approximately 50% of entrants opting to enter online. For 2011 the Awards entry process has been further upgraded with an online entry process to facilitate more expedient uploading of files.

Conference Website

The NGI Conference website is used to inform people about the Conference, promote the event and provide updates after the event.

Much effort was put into making the 2010 Conference Website comprehensive, informative and attractive. Leading up to the event it featured information about the Conference program, speaker bios, tour information and the option to register online. Post the event it was updated with photos and speaker presentations for the enjoyment and benefit of Conference delegates.

Greenlife Careers Website

NGIA have launched a web based project which contains a multitude of fact sheets and video representations of various career options, incorporating all sectors of the Amenity Horticulture industry from Production Nursery to Arboriculture. Also containing training information and training provider contact details; jobs vacant listings; positions wanted listings; employer information including federal award and government contacts.

This site aims to bring all relevant industry associations and stakeholders together in a one-stop shop for career and employment services.

Publications

In August 2009 NGIA undertook an industry publications survey to determine which publications were being read, whether the content was perceived as being relevant and whether a National magazine was a viable option for industry rather than individual state publications.

The outcome of this survey saw a revamp of the look and feel of Clippings and the termination of e-commpost. To ensure effective dissemination of information throughout industry on a regular basis articles and media releases have been regularly sent to the State offices for distribution through their communication vehicles as well as posting on the NGIA website.

Both of these publications were mailed to industry as both hard and soft copies as well as being available to download from the NGIA website. Archives of these publications for the duration of this project can be downloaded from the NGIA website www.ngia.com.au

NGIA Clippings

This monthly newsletter features stories and case studies relevant to the industry and the National Strategic Plan. Presented in a clear and easy to read format, Clippings focuses on the latest news and updates on levy-funded marketing and research & development programs. This year Clippings was revamped with a new design and monthly sections.

Nursery Papers

These periodicals aim to develop knowledge and expertise in areas relevant to businesses in the nursery and garden industry. Written by the IDO network or technical experts these papers have become a highly valued method of disseminating information for business improvement for industry from a technical, marketing or skills perspective. Distributed monthly and colour-coded for easy reference, the papers explore a wide variety of business, technical and marketing issues that can be implemented immediately.

Nursery Paper Schedule February – August 2010

Month	Topic	Skill Perspective
February	Young Leaders	Marketing
March	Pocket Diagnostic	Technical
April	Dealing with frost	Technical
May	Tissue Culture	Technical
June	Plant Labeling	Marketing
July	Indoor Plants	Technical
August	Carbon Calculator	Technical

Industry Updates

Articles were sent to each state on a regular basis. The following table demonstrates NGIA sent the articles and when they were picked up by the State Offices and which communication vehicle they used.

Industry Alerts

An Industry Alert for Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus was distributed in April 2010 and one for Myrtle Rust in April 2010. (See Appendix) I

OUTCOMES & BENEFITS TO INDUSTRY

OUTCOME	BENEFIT
Timely and comprehensive communications via print and electronic publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Industry is kept informed of key issues ○ Opportunities for industry to follow up on key points with IDO/BSDO network
Increased awareness among NGI members and stakeholders of projects and activities occurring at a national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understanding of where levy funds have been invested ○ Understanding that Industry is involved with key issues at both Government and State level. ○ Industry is able to utilise the resources developed
Promotion of national industry programs and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Industry has the opportunity to engage with how funds are invested. ○ Industry can take up the outcomes from research projects very quickly ○ Awareness of programs is extensive as publications are all freely available on the www.ngia.com.au website
Ongoing development of industry members' technical, business and marketing expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skill development within IDO/BSDO network in developing Nursery Papers ○ Delivery of technical subjects in easy to understand language to all industry stakeholders. This enables follow up if required.
Unified approach to communications nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All stakeholder receive the same consistent message ○ All stakeholders receive the same level of professional communication

Circulation Statistics

The circulation statistics for Nursery Papers and Clipping have declined during the course of this project as a consequence of continually cleansing and updating of the database.

- NGIA *Clippings* – 1000 in hard copy. Emailed 1720
- NGIA *Nursery Papers* –1000 in hard copy. Emailed 1720

NGIA Website Hits:

		#
From	To	Visitors
Jul-09	Aug-09	213
Aug-09	Sep-09	18,343
Sep-09	Oct-09	6,015
Oct-09	Nov-09	6,061
Nov-09	Dec-09	5,623
Dec-09	Jan-10	4,304
Jan-10	Feb-10	213
Feb-10	Mar-10	20,178
Mar-10	Apr-10	28,936
Apr-10	May-10	20,233
May-10	Jun-10	16,993
Jun-10	Jul-10	19,890
Jul-10	Aug-10	29,205
Aug-10	Sep-10	4,487

The website activity appears to be very strong outside the key selling months of spring. This trend has been demonstrated for the past two years and look sets to continue.

Peaks in website traffic can be attributed to events such as the NGI Industry Awards closing, Conference and in response to Nursery Paper and Clippings e-broadcasts.

Since the termination of e-commpost we have seen traffic spiking in the days after the e-broadcast is sent. This is good for strengthening our rankings and for driving traffic to our website. In addition, Industry is encouraged to familiarise themselves with its functionality and benefit as an information/communication resource

NEXT STEPS

NGIA Website

- Ongoing development of website content
- Uploading of downloadable file and materials for industry

NGIA Clippings and Nursery Papers

- Ongoing publication in print and electronic formats.
- Electronic versions available on the NGIA Industry website
- More engaging communication of industry levy programs
- Development of Nursery papers which are distributed electronically only
- Investigate insertion of Nursery Papers in Industry magazines

NGIA Issue Alerts

- Publication as required.

NGIA Database

- Development will continue to ensure consistent and regular communication with whole of industry.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The financial summary for the project is as follows:

Activity	Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance
Printed communications	\$248,000	\$219,500	\$28,500
Bulletins and Faxes	\$38,000	\$12,500	\$25,500
Nursery Papers	\$75,000	\$74,000	\$1,000
Website Design and Management	\$134,000	\$120,000	\$14,000
	\$495,000	\$426,000	\$69,000

Milestone	Marketing Levy	R&D Levy	Total Funding	Status
101	\$30,000	\$100,000	\$130,000	Received by NGIA from HAL
102	\$15,000	\$80,000	\$95,000	Received by NGIA from HAL
103	\$20,000	\$75,000	\$95,000	Received by NGIA from HAL
104	\$19,000	\$66,000	\$85,000	Received by NGIA from HAL
190	\$21,000	\$69,000- withheld	\$21,000	\$21,000 to be paid upon acceptance of this report. \$69,000 to be withheld from final payment.
Total	\$105,000	\$321,000	\$426,000	

NEXT STEPS

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NGIA Clippings and Nursery Papers

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- Electronic versions available on the NGIA Industry website
- More engaging communication of industry levy programs
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NGIA Database

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APPENDIX

Myrtle Rust Alert

Issue Alert!

Exotic Plant Pest

Issue #: 01/10

Date: 30 April 2010

To: Australian Nursery Industry

Subject: Detection of Emergency Plant Pest

Background:

Plant material sampled from a cut flower/foilage producer in NSW has been confirmed as *Uredo rangelii* (**Myrtle rust**). This is the first time this fungus has been found in Australia and is identified as a disease of significance in the Nursery Industry Biosecurity Plan.

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) has agreed that further survey work is required around the infected property. Trace forward and trace back actions are occurring to find other possible incidents of this plant rust. Infected plant material has and is being treated with fungicides to contain the infection on site while further surveys are undertaken.

This is the first known identification of the *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust) on *Agonis flexuosa* (Willow Myrtle), a species native to Western Australia but planted widely across Australia as an ornamental. Once more is known about the extent of spread of the rust, a response plan will be considered by the CCEPP.

Myrtle Rust:

This plant disease is closely related to the fungi causing guava rust, which is also known as eucalyptus rust, and part of a complex of rusts that infect the Myrtaceae family of plants which include many Australian native species.

Rusts are highly transportable. Their spores can be spread via contaminated clothing, infected plant material, on equipment and by insect movement and wind dispersal.

These types of rust affect commercial plant growing operations and native ecosystems. The response is being managed in consultation with state and commonwealth environment agencies.

Industry Response:

The NGIA has agreed to distribute this Pest Alert nationally to encourage the nursery industry to inspect your crops/stock and on-site vegetation for signs of this rust disease. A fact sheet with photos of the disease and information on identifying and reporting the disease is attached for industry to quickly detect any further infected sites across Australia.

**PLEASE REPORT ANY SUSPECT DETECTIONS ON
1800 084 881**



Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia

PEST ALERT

Nursery & Garden Industry Australia

Pest Alert April 2010

Identification Sheet *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust)

The fungus *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust) has been detected on a commercial property on the New South Wales central coast. Myrtle rust is considered to be part of a group of rust fungi collectively known as eucalyptus/guava rust.

Early identification of this rust is vital to eradication efforts.



Uredo rangelii on *Agonis flexuosa*

Host species:

In Australia, Myrtle rust has recently been detected on *Agonis* (willow myrtle), *Syncarpia* (turpentine) and *Callistemon* (bottlebrush) species. Internationally, there are unconfirmed reports of infection on some *Eucalyptus* species. It has also been confirmed on *Myrtus*, *Syzygium* and *Heteropyxis* species overseas.

Spread:

Rusts are highly transportable. The most common dispersal mechanism is via wind but they may also attract bees who work the spores on leaves. The spores can also be spread via contaminated clothing, infected plant material and insect movement.



Uredo rangelii on *Agonis flexuosa*

Identification:

Myrtle rust produces lesions on young, actively growing leaves and shoots, as well as on fruits and sepals. Leaves may become buckled or twisted as a result of infection. On turpentine and callistemon rust lesions are purple in colour, with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow spores. Occasionally, they may have dark brown spores. Severe rust disease in young trees may kill shoot tips, causing loss of leaders and a bushy habit.

Any rust on myrtaceae should be reported.



Uredo rangelii on Turpentine

Reporting:

**To report suspect cases of Myrtle rust please call
the**

Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: 1800 084 881