



Nursery & Garden Industry  
Australia

# Case Study

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For immediate release

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## Biosecurity a 'no brainer' for growing media manufacturers

### Introduction

The increasing threat of exotic pests, weeds and disease that comes with globalisation has put biosecurity preparedness top of mind for Queensland based group, Green Fingers Potting Mix and Rocky Point Mulching.

Now in their sixth year at a 70 acre site at Woongoolba, located north of the City of Gold Coast, the group has continued to grow its market share, while at the same time adopting best practice programs and standards to remain ahead of the curve.

The group is made up of three divisions, including Green Fingers potting mix for production nurseries and landscape industries; Rocky Point mulching for the wide variety of agricultural commodities grown across Queensland and NSW; and a modern waste management facility.



(L-R) Mark Rayner, Green Fingers Potting Mix. Dan Willmann, Rocky Point Mulching.

The business is currently undergoing a re-branding exercise due for completion later this year, which will unite the three companies under one easily recognisable brand, Rocky Point.

### Becoming BioSecure HACCP certified

The group recently decided to move toward BioSecure HACCP certification, which will help streamline market access, as around 50 per cent of their product is traded interstate.

Green Fingers Production Manager Mark Rayner says recent outbreaks of Tomato potato psyllid in Western Australia and White Spot Disease in the local area are a chilling reminder for businesses to examine their biosecurity preparedness and put in place preventative measures.

"There's an unprecedented amount of plant and product moving around the world, which is impacting our nation's favourable biosecurity status. In 2016 alone, there were around 40 pests and pathogens introduced into Australia," Mr Rayner said.



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“Our businesses are based on the fringe of fire ant territory. At the moment, Biosecurity Queensland visit every 28 days, and issue a plant health certificate that enables our product to go across the border.



*On-site at Green Fingers Potting Mix and Rocky Point Mulching.*

“We’re in constant communication with departmental and industry stakeholders about movement controls, so as to ensure we have the latest information of what’s happening on the ground.

“We believe we’re finally in a position to self-regulate and manage these risks internally, and BioSecure HACCP will help us to do that.

“It can be challenging working across various state jurisdictions, particularly when it comes to plant health

standards. We hope BioSecure HACCP will help provide that national recognition, and allow us to speak more of the same language.”

### **Invest in staff**

The group recently employed a Quality Assurance Officer to ensure a smooth and streamlined transition from already-adopted programs such as Nursery Industry Accrediation Scheme, Australia (NIASA) and EcoHort™.

Implementing Biosecure HACCP is expected to take three to six months, with the biggest cost to the business being the installation of a hygiene station, which must take into account traffic conditions and new offices being built on site.

Mr Rayner says BioSecure HACCP provides a set of guidelines to assist in identifying biosecurity risks and implementing controls at critical points throughout the business.

“In the green industry you’re confronted with biosecurity threats on a daily basis, and we now have procedures and stringent check lists to help our staff identify and manage any issues before they become a major problem.

“It’s about continual education and being proactive. For example, we just had 20 employees complete their fire ant certificate, with over a third set to become fully accredited Fire Ant Officers,” Mr Rayner said.

“From our point of view, investing in our staff, our standards and our supply chain just makes good business sense.”

### **Keeping on top of your game**



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Mr Rayner says meeting the highest standards – whether this is recognition of organic soils or quality mulching – provides added security for new customers.

“We have invested in a range of standards over the years to provide that guarantee that says ‘you’re getting a high quality product’.

“In the nursery industry, it all starts with growing media – so if a business is looking for a supplier, they’re looking for one which guarantees quality with minimal risk.

“Essentially, it’s a great selling point, and you’re also doing the right thing by your staff, the business and the industry, by being at the top of your game.”

***BioSecure HACCP was developed by Nursery & Garden Industry Australia in partnership with Horticulture Innovation Australia using the nursery R&D levy and funds from the Australian Government.***

***For information on how to get involved, go to <http://nurseryproductionfms.com.au/> or contact NGIA on 02 8861 5100 or [info@ngia.com.au](mailto:info@ngia.com.au)***

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**A video case study is also available [here](#).**

For further information, please contact Sophie Keatinge, Cox Inall Communications, on 0430 938 515 or [sophie.keatinge@coxinall.com.au](mailto:sophie.keatinge@coxinall.com.au)

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