



Greenlife Industry Australia

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GIA Extension Officer Network: Your best practice guides

Each grower's journey towards improved plant health looks different. For some growers, the adoption of basic crop monitoring is a big and important leap in high health plant production. Others are working towards becoming skilled in the roll-out of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), whilst others are actively seeking accreditation for best management practice programs such as Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA), BioSecure HACCP and EcoHort.

However, according to Barry Naylor, one of Greenlife Industry Australia's (GIA) Extension Officers, there is no one-way to plot your sustainable plant production journey.

Operating under the strategic levy-funded project *National biosecurity and sustainable plant production program* (NY20001), Barry's role is to work with growers and production nurseries to improve plant protection, biosecurity and sustainable cropping systems including water, energy, and growing media.

Barry works with a wide variety of growers and is trusted to provide counsel and advice across the technical elements of plant production as well as a clear pathway towards Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS) adoption and implementation across industry best management practice, environmental and natural resource management, and high health plant production programs.

Just ask Gerard Batt, from Australian Bush Trees, who has worked closely with Barry to help set up his business for success from the outset.

"We just started the nursery and as we're growing things such as brachychiton which take 10 years to mature, it is a long-term investment," he said.

"So, we need to ensure we are getting things right."

"We have connected with Barry Naylor, and he is helping us firstly to bring the nursery into production and then by advising us on continuous improvement on our work programs."

"Barry will also be guiding us through our NIASA certification program, which we hope to complete by September 2024.

"By reaching certification from the inception of our business, we will have the peace of mind that our long-term investment is in the best shape that it can be."

Kristian Spink, Nursery Manager at Marlborough Nursery in south east Queensland who predominantly grow palms, agrees saying that the GIA Extension Officer program is helping them progress to the highest level of plant health and achieve BioSecure HACCP accreditation.

"Barry and the team are very practical in setting goals and making sure momentum is maintained throughout the accreditation process," he said.

"We look forward to working with Barry and the GIA extension officers as we continue to improve our business and growing practices, their industry knowledge as well as technical skill is a great asset that more business should take advantage of."

GIA's Extension Officers take a hands-on role in their consultation with growers. Just ask Chris Hart from Hart's Nursery, an indoor, patio, exotic outdoor and agricultural plant grower in Queensland.



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“GIA Extension Officers took all our staff through introductory online training regarding best management practices programs including NIASA, EcoHort and BioSecure HACCP,” he said.

“Barry then assisted us to set up our chosen members of the team with logins for both the AMS and online learning. This allowed our staff to undertake online learning in key areas which both benefited their growth and helped in their daily tasks.”

The GIA Extension Officer network is nationwide and access to these experts is available to all levy-payers in all states and territories.

“Whether you are looking to commence formal certification as a NIASA accredited nursery, or you are interested in learning more about how to improve the basics of plant production, we want to hear from you,” said Barry.

The GIA industry Extension Officers offer advice across a broad remit of plant production topics beyond plant health and biosecurity.



Barry Naylor assisting staff at Marlborough Nursery

“We are experts in best practice management for nursery production whether that be pest and disease management, sustainable resource use,

waste reduction, irrigation, and process improvement,” he said.

According to Barry, there is a misconception that adoption of best management practice requires a major commitment to become NIASA-certified. “Many production nurseries see incredible value in attaining NIASA certification and being able to demonstrate that their business has secured that certification, which drives continuous improvement through annual assessments,” he said.

“However, for those production nurseries who may not be ready to seek NIASA, EcoHort or BioSecure HACCP certification, adopting best management practice is still important and my role is as much about supporting these growers as it is working with those seeking formal accreditation, grab the manuals (<https://nurseryproductionfms.com.au/>) and give your regional GIA Extension Officer a call.

“The Australian Plant Production Standard website (<https://nurseryproductionfms.com.au/>) has reams of technical guides and information and there is plenty of other interactive resources available for growers such as the Pest ID tool (<https://pestid.com.au/>) and eLearning modules, all of which are designed to support growers and staff on their best practice journeys.

“My role is to help growers connect with the most suitable information, work with them as they seek to adopt and implement best management practices, and when appropriate launch them into formal accreditation processes.

In many ways, implementing best management practice is a ‘choose your own adventure’, there is often not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to improving plant production systems.

Getting started, or keeping on track can become confusing, that is why the GIA Extension Officer network is on hand – to act as your guide.



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“We are here to support growers on the journey that they choose, so please do not hesitate to get in touch with the GIA team today,” Barry said.

Any grower who is looking to improve their own plant production processes, should head to the Australian Plant Production Standard website (<https://nurseryproductionfms.com.au>) today or contact the GIA Extension Officer in your area:

- **QLD/Northern NSW:** Barry Naylor
Barry.Naylor@greenlifeindustry.com.au
- **NSW/Northern VIC:** Colin Hunt
Colin.Hunt@greenlifeindustry.com.au
- **VIC/SA:** Kimberley Thomas
Kimberley.Thomas@greenlifeindustry.com.au
- **WA/NT:** Steve Blyth
Steve.Blyth@greenlifeindustry.com.au
- **TAS/SA:** Celeste Cook
Celeste.Cook@greenlifeindustry.com.au
- **National Biosecurity Manager, John McDonald**
John.Mcdonald@greenlifeindustry.com.au

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**Hort
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Strategic levy investment

**NURSERY
FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au