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## Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification enhancing customer confidence at MacQ Nursery

**Innovation and the adoption of best practice plant protection and biosecurity measures on farm is critical to the delivery of high-quality nursery trees and maximising customer confidence for continued business growth.**

This philosophy is top of mind for Johan Oosthuizen, Farm Manager at MacQ Nursery, a four-hectare commercial macadamia production nursery located in Bundaberg, Queensland.

MacQ Nursery delivers over 100,000 macadamia trees each year, operating under the highest standards by being Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) and NIASA Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification certified, supplying growers primarily in the Bundaberg region.

Aiming to deliver high quality trees to local growers, MacQ continues to improve production systems to ensure customers have confidence that they're receiving quality trees on schedule.

"Growers purchasing our nursery stock are looking for assurance that our products are of top quality, that they meet industry standards, and will be a productive investment, following the point of sale," Johan said.

"Achieving formal industry accreditation has been a high priority for the business, and we received NIASA and Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification certification in June 2020.

"Going through the process has helped us to improve and streamline best management practices. We now have standard operating procedures in place for every process, with a set of expectations for the entire team to ensure everyone is on the same page and adhering to best management practice.

"This has included a big push towards palletising and benching in our operation to make working easier and more efficient, mitigating risk from pests and disease.

"We also source fresh seed nut at the start of each harvest season in March and April which are germinated in sand beds that are raised and covered in plastic with overhead sprinklers to ensure we're adhering to the optimum water and humidity requirement. After 12 weeks, we carefully select rootstock that has good root systems and pot them into six litre bags, then they are transferred to raised, shaded cloth areas to be regularly monitored and culled to remove poor seedlings before they are grafted six to nine months later."

The NIASA Macadamia Nursery Stock Specifications gives the macadamia industry a clear guide when making decisions around sourcing planting stock with the highest potential to perform.

"The procedures and changes we made in the business to achieve Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification complemented what we were already implementing for NIASA, giving us confidence in what we're doing and the guidelines we had put in place," he said.

"The most substantial change we had to make was the tagging of trees. All trees are now labelled with information identifying the date of potting, the grafter, source of scion wood, variety and date of grafting to help with traceability for compliance with the NIASA Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification accreditation requirements."

Going through the process of achieving formal accreditation and being more critical on seedling quality and viability in early stages is helping MacQ make significant strides towards reducing stock losses.



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“By linking the tree ID to monitor development, we now have timeframes and a series of guidelines that we follow to examine the root systems and check for disease, giving us a full history of the plant right at our fingertips,” Johan said.

“This capability allows us to visually track growth and development and include data around pest and disease monitoring that helps us improve the business on an operating level and allows us to track back to the source of any outbreaks quickly and effectively.

“This is giving us and our customers confidence that we are meeting standards and removes any guess work so we can focus on making further advancements to enhance the productivity and profitability across the enterprise.

“We are currently in the process of evaluating our facilities with plans to upgrade our production capabilities and environmental controls. We're installing a new UV water treatment system that will allow us to disinfest our surface water so it's within required parameters for accreditation, giving us certainty that we have adequate clean water for our products.”

Achieving certification has been a really important step for the business, showcasing continual business improvement and ensuring the consistent delivery of high-quality trees to growers.

“Adhering to NIASA supports our business long-term by ensuring that we are maintaining best practice standards and building our reputation as a premium supplier of macadamia nursery stock,” Johan said.

“The advancements we've made through this process have reduced manual handling, the pallets having galvanised frames prevents trees from falling over in transit, raising plants off the ground is reducing the risk of transfer of pathogens, and the selection of best seedlings has reduced discards.

“We can confidently say that through formal certification we have been able to improve the quality and success rates of all ages of trees, and reaped benefits from reduced labour input into activities such as weeding.

“Having traceability in place improves our accountability at every level, it improves productivity through time and

labour savings, and has given us confidence that we will deliver growth and create demand going forward.

“We would strongly recommend production nurseries to look at NIASA and, if appropriate, sub-programs such as the Macadamia, Avocado, Banana and Landscape Nursery Stock Specifications. Accreditation sets the benchmark and lifts the growth potential for the entire industry.”

The Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification – Appendix 15 in the 8th edition of the NIASA BMP Guidelines provide specialist guidance to macadamia production nurseries and allow an interested business to become NIASA accredited for meeting macadamia nursery production standards.

In order for a production nursery to be eligible to be accredited as meeting the Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification, the business must first be NIASA accredited and have been found at audit to have implemented mandatory procedures to a satisfactory standard.

Access the Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification Checklist [here](#). To apply for NIASA, or for further enquiries on NIASA Macadamia Nursery Stock Specification accreditation, please contact: [biosecure@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:biosecure@greenlifeindustry.com.au) or (02) 8861 5100.



**ENDS**

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