

Emma De Landre

Industry loves

I love working outdoors and I love plants. There is always more to learn about plants, and they are easier to look after than people (laughs). Seriously, “teamwork” can be a cliché, but some of my greatest achievements have been because of the people I work with. You cannot do it alone. People in this industry are generally practical and a lot of fun to work with. Production of quality plants takes skill, commitment, and knowledge. I have been fortunate to work with so many professional growers from diverse backgrounds.

Current Role

Plant Protection Officer
Greenlife Industry Australia

Responsibilities

My role is to provide businesses with technical advice relevant to plant production, promote nursery best practice management and act as the nursery industry biosecurity contact in NSW. This holistic approach contributes to efficient and sustainable plant production. I also audit businesses participating in industry accreditation programs including NIASA Nursery Production, Ecohort (Environmental Management Program) and Biosecure HACCP.

Skills required

To be successful in my role, it is important to have knowledge of plant production and biosecurity principles. Qualifications in horticulture are essential. I am also required to maintain professional certifications around business auditing and chemical training. Importantly, good communication skills and the ability to develop trusted working relationships is critical to successful engagement with industry.

Qualifications

Since graduating as an apprentice, I have also completed a Diploma of Horticulture, Certificate IV in Training & Assessment and completed the Masterclass in Horticultural Business with UTAS. I am currently studying Horticultural Science at CSU.

Career Highlight

There have been many memorable moments in my career including a Flame Tree planting with Jimmy Barnes in honour of Steve Prestwich, Cold Chisel's drummer. I have collected seed and propagated a rare tree species myself which is now growing in a complete forest at The National Arboretum, Canberra. I am also proud of managing a crew to deliver 540,000 potted trees over winter despite record breaking floods while at Ferrero in the NSW Riverina.



Emma grew up in Yass in New South Wales and Canberra, starting her career in horticulture at seventeen with an apprenticeship working at a retail nursery, Pialligo Plant Farm.

“I’ve always been interested in plants for as long as I can remember. I started a herb garden as a teenager and regularly visited a local nursery to buy herbs. In my last year of school they offered me an apprenticeship – and I said yes.”

After completing her trade certificate, Emma spent many years developing skills as a horticulturist in both the retail and production sectors. During this time, she also began writing a garden column for The Daily Telegraph as ‘The Garden Doctor’.

“I was contacted by the editor for comment on a story. When it went to print the information was out of context. I rang the editor to discuss. By the end of the conversation, they had offered me a job to write a regular weekly column.”

Emma commenced a role as Nursery Technical Officer at Canberra Institute of Technology where she taught nursery subjects part time and in 2010, she began as Senior Horticulturist at the National Arboretum Canberra (NAC). This role focused on implementing the design masterplan and evolved into arboretum Project Manager.

“I was responsible for overseeing the propagation and planting of trees, developing contract specifications, coordinating design competitions, writing policies, landscape management and delivering the ‘Water Security Project.’”

After the Arboretum opened to the public Emma was approached about another greenfield project with the Australian arm of Ferrero, Agri Australis, in Narrandera NSW. They were establishing a 2,000 Ha hazelnut orchard and needed a Nursery Manager to produce tree stock from mother plants for internal plantings and out growers.

“I started as the Nursery Manager and coordinated intensive production of hazelnut trees with a team of 8 locals and up to 80 labour hire during the peak season.”

I am currently studying Horticultural Science at Charles Sturt University to develop skills in science subjects such as botany, plant physiology and microbiology. While I received significant study credit for my extensive industry experience, the skills I am learning support me in my Plant Protection Officer role and general knowledge of plants.