

NURSERY PAPERS

MARCH
2020

Making the marketing levy work for you

Marketing is an incredibly important function of any business. The nursery industry's marketing levy enables an investment in a marketing program that raises awareness of the importance of green space amongst consumers, business and government, as well as generate demand for greenlife throughout the value chain.

Although production nurseries have traditionally been a few steps removed from the consumer, the levy funded marketing program is connecting us like never before.

This Nursery Paper showcases some of the latest updates from the marketing levy, such as *Greener Spaces Better Places* and the *Plant Life Balance* program, providing advice on how you can make the most of these investments in marketing.

SUMMARY

- A series of projects funded by the nursery marketing levy equip growers with useful information to support their business' marketing strategy
- Your marketing strategy should be about much more than simply talking about your greenlife products
- Empower staff to be a valuable component of your business marketing strategy
- Plants have always been more than just a "visual" product. It's important to demonstrate the wider benefits, value and impact of plants beyond visual amenity
- Collectively, we need to embrace the marketing program outputs and tools available, and where we can, be advocates for the benefits and importance of green space

BACKGROUND

The value and benefits of greenlife need to be underpinned by evidence based research and science, which then provide the intrinsic evidence to support the claims of the nursery industry marketing program. Hort Innovation facilitates the investment of the industry's marketing program, with projects developed in line with the Strategic Investment Plan.

The outputs from these projects are communicated to a range of customer audiences with the aim to grow demand for greenlife, encourage expansion of green space in urban areas and support the continued prosperity of the nursery industry.

Managed by the Republic of Everyone and The Bravery, there are two main components of the levy funded marketing program, both targeted



to driving demand for greenlife. They are *Greener Spaces Better Places* and *Plant Life Balance*.

Greener Spaces Better Places, which continues the 2020 Vision marketing program, has a mission to make green space grow as our cities do by working with government and business sectors. Through Australia's largest network of 6,000+ greening decision-makers it focuses on sharing research and tools which showcase the positive impact green space has on our communities, whether that be by reducing the urban heat island effect, improving air quality, managing storm water or reducing atmospheric carbon levels.

Plant Life Balance is a consumer-facing campaign. The program includes initiatives such as regular green lifestyle events, a blog full of tips and tricks, developing the Plant Life Balance app and an Australian-first Plant Life Balance trend report. By leveraging research and input from experts, Plant Life Balance ensures that greenlife continues to be desired in retail, office and home environments.

Although apps and 'urban greening' campaigns might seem a "world away" from the daily routine of producing greenlife in a nursery, they are in fact inherently linked. The resources being developed by these programs are used to influence the audiences that purchase plants. The resources are also available to all growers, and by taking the time to engage, access, understand and use them, businesses can leverage them as additional aspects of marketing strategies.



Greener Spaces Better Places

Greener Spaces Better Places is the continuation of the 2020 Vision initiative, ensuring our green space grows as our cities do, through commissioning and publishing research, developing how-to guides and conducting events with key green space practitioners around Australia. Since 2013, the program has produced a series of guides for industry, to help engage decision makers and ultimately influence green space planning decisions.

WHERE SHOULD ALL THE TREES GO?

An example of a levy funded research publication which provides evidence to support greenlife marketing is *Where Should All the Trees Go?* This incredibly useful publication compares greenlife canopy levels overlaid with urban heat and socio-economic data, to provide an overall vulnerability indicator. Essentially, it tells us which areas in Australia are in the most need of greenlife and canopy cover.

This information is invaluable to production nurseries as it provides a map of the localities which are in most need of green space, and therefore where the greatest opportunities are for production nurseries to market their product.

So, what did this research tell us?

1. **There is a lot of work to be done.** 34% of councils surveyed reported a significant increase in hard surfaces over a four year period between 2013 and 2017. None reported a decline
2. **Queensland and Northern Territory lead the way.** Over 90% of the areas surveyed in these states are covered by trees, shrubs, or grass, meaning less than 10% is covered in hard surfaces. It's important that this green space is defended
3. **Canopy and shrubbery can complement each other.** In areas where canopy cover declined, shrubbery normally increased

How to leverage these insights in your business

Where Should All the Trees Go? is an example of an output funded by the marketing levy that provides robustness to your business strategy and should be utilised.

GEOGRAPHICAL SEGMENTATION

This output focuses on analysing green space through a geographical lens. Essentially it provides the science-based backing that proves which areas of the country, down to the specific Local Government Area are most in need of green space. Armed with this knowledge, growers can direct their sales and marketing efforts accordingly. The resource should also be consulted when making planning decisions for potential expansion or consolidation.

SALES APPROACH

Greener Spaces Better Places empowers nurseries and its sales staff to have new conversations with customers. The reports developed provide information to arm your sales team with key information, backed by robust science, which explains the impact greenlife has on things like urban heat islands, air quality and overall health of our towns and cities.

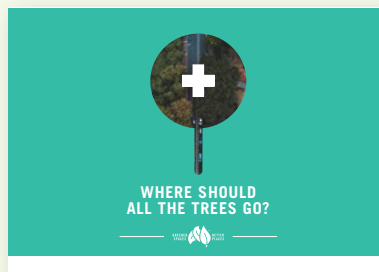
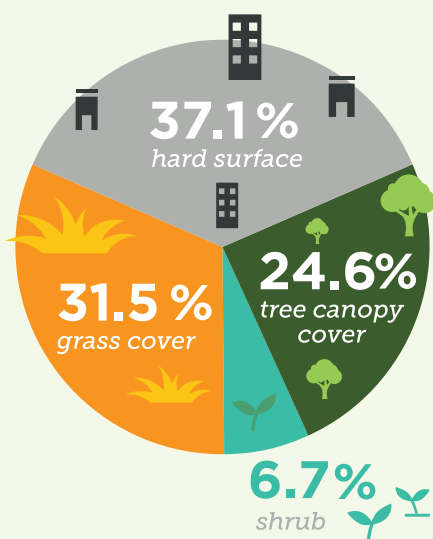
BECOME A PARTNER

By signing up to become a *Greener Spaces Better Places* partner, you will be joining hundreds of individuals and organisations helping to grow more and better urban green spaces in Australia.

You will be the first to receive new research and you may also be called upon to help support the future development of guides, research or media opportunities which will ultimately raise your profile as a business, leading to higher demand for your products and services.

Become a *Greener Spaces Better Places* partner here: <https://www.greenerplacesbetterplaces.com.au/get-involved/>

NATIONAL URBAN AVERAGE COMPARISON



In 'Where are all the trees', the national average was calculated by averaging the state averages. In this report we have chosen to update the methodology to make the national average an average of all LGAs, as we believe it more accurately represents the true figure.



Plant Life Balance Trend Report

In order to understand the ways in which consumers purchase plants and their motivations, a robust research project was conducted.

The research provided the data and information for the Plant Life Balance Trend Report, an invaluable tool to guide the marketing and business strategies for production nurseries. The report is available at <https://myplantlifebalance.com.au/plant-life-balance-presents-2020-plant-predictions/>

After interviewing

>1000

Australians who bought a potted plant in the last 12 months

+ 20

nursery retailers

+ 9

experts across horticulture, academia and design

The result...



How marketing can guide your business strategy

There are many lessons to be gained from these trends which may influence your approach to your marketing mix.

GREENLIFE PRODUCTS

These trends should be used to inform your production planning and seasonal stock rotation. For example, this information should be considered to determine new product ranges, the size of your range, species and flower colour. By following these trends, wholesalers can support their customers by increasing supply of low maintenance plants (trend one), or plants that have the most impact on mental and physical health (trend five).

PROMOTION

Social media is on the rise within the nursery industry (trend four). As businesses become more social media savvy, it's important that wholesale and production nurseries are joining the crowd and exploring new ways to connect with their customers via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Visual identity is as important as ever, even for wholesalers.

The report identifies an opportunity to meet consumer demand for plant styling and impactful photography.

CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS

Outputs developed by the marketing levy are designed to be referenced and used by the industry with customers. The Trend Report is available online (links on the final page of this Nursery Paper). Growers are encouraged to download and share with staff, suppliers and customers. The insights contained will start new conversations and power the growth of your business.

THE TRENDS

TREND ONE: Low maintenance statements	Over the last 12 months, 2 in 5 Australians bought a low-maintenance plant, in acknowledgement of a need to be waterwise.
TREND TWO: Nostalgia for nature	This trend recognises that entire rooms are being designed with nature in mind, whether that be the wallpaper, pots or other decorations.
TREND THREE: A home among the gum trees	A resurgence in the popularity of natives is being driven by a growing interest in sustainability and biodiversity in Australian society. Google searches of "native plant nursery" also increased by 44% in Australia over the past 5 years, according to the report.
TREND FOUR: Truth and trust	Over the last 12 months, nursery retailers have seen the biggest increase in spending by 18-35 year olds. This is largely driven by social media and almost half of Australians (49%) use social media as a source for seeking gardening advice.
TREND FIVE: Horticulture for health	2020 will see a rise in the use of gardening as a tool for mindfulness. With Australians putting a greater focus on mental health people are looking for different ways to reduce stress.
TREND SIX: Experience is everything	Biophilic design, a type of design that incorporates elements of nature, is on the rise. Hybrid nursery/cafés, bars, and B&Bs are popping up across the country. This is an opportunity for the nursery industry to push the boundaries on where plants can add value.



CASE STUDY: Benara Nurseries

Benara Nurseries is a large production nursery based in Western Australia, and with over 120 hectares under production across a 200 hectare property. The business targets retail and wholesale markets.

In order to cut-through each of these diverse market segments, Benara empowers its sales teams to have meaningful conversations with customers based on science and research.

Carole Fudge, sales and marketing manager at Benara Nurseries, is a strong advocate for the levy funded marketing program.

“Plant Life Balance and Greener Spaces Better Places is a valuable science based tool to our sales team, educating and supporting them in their daily conversations with our customers.”



Carole Fudge, Benara Nurseries

Whether it be sharing findings of the Trend Report with a retail customer or presenting to landscapers about the importance of green space in reducing the urban heat island, the “tools” are helping Benara continue its ambitious growth strategy.

The nursery also shares all the content from *Plant Life Balance* and *Greener Spaces Better Places* via social media and email, which receives positive feedback from retailers, landscapers and developers. It also uses the content as talking points for industry events and sales meetings.

Benara Nurseries has a mission statement to ‘Grow for a Greener Community’. By focusing its marketing efforts on delivering research-based, impactful information it ensures not only the bottom line of the business improves, but also that we are seeing more greenspace in our urban communities.



Benara Nurseries

CAROLE'S TOP TIPS

- 1. UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS.** Whether you are embarking on a marketing strategy for the first time, or you just want to get more involved in the content from the marketing levy, the first step is to understand your business, your customers and the story you want to tell. The tools from the marketing levy can help illustrate your story.
- 2. YOUR STAFF ARE YOUR GREATEST ASSET.** In order to get the most out of the marketing levy, you need to bring your staff along on the journey. Both sales and operational staff should have a solid understanding of how research impacts our industry.
- 3. ENGAGE WITH PARTNER INDUSTRIES.** Whether it be retailers' associations, landscaper events or town planning forums, it's important for both your business and our industry that we are out there sharing the robust content found in *Plant Life Balance* and *Greener Spaces Better Places*.
- 4. SHARE, SHARE, SHARE.** Content is only as good as its audience, so focus on building channels to reach your customers. Social media and email are incredibly important, but good customer relationships are just as vital to the sharing of information.
- 5. NEVER STOP SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION.** A good business has an unquenchable thirst for content and information that may help it market its product and improve the lives of its customers. You should be receiving regular updates on marketing levy activities via newsletters, social media and through publications such as this nursery paper.

FINDING MORE INFORMATION

All growers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the work of the marketing levy. To get started check out the following resources:

Plant Life Balance: <https://myplantlifebalance.com.au/>

Greener Places Better Spaces: <https://www.greenerplacesbetterplaces.com.au/>

Where should all the trees go?: <https://www.greenerplacesbetterplaces.com.au/ratings/>

Who's with us? (tips for community engagement): <https://www.greenerplacesbetterplaces.com.au/guides/who-s-with-us/>

What's the story? (A guide for developers): <https://www.greenerplacesbetterplaces.com.au/guides/whats-the-story/>

PAST EDITIONS OF NURSERY PAPERS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE, on the Greenlife Industry Australia website: https://www.greenlifeindustry.com.au/Section?Action=View&Section_id=46

