



W I L D F L O W E R S
A U S T R A L I A

October 2011 newsletter¹

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Australian Government
Rural Industries Research and
Development Corporation

Vase life guarantees – an update from Japan.

Kazuko Nishikawa from Austrade's Tokyo office has advised WFA of current interest in the Japanese market in the concept of a vase life guarantee. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in Japan is presently funding a vase life guarantee project. The project work is mostly assigned to MPS Japan. MPS Japan's main role is to promote the MPS certificate in Japan and also to help Japanese companies applying for the MPS certificate which is the same standard as applies in Europe. MAFF appointed MPS Japan to work on the vase life guarantee project because they are considered best placed to do this.

The interest in vase life guarantees has been prompted by the example set by the UK supermarket chain TESCO, which increased percentages of flower sales (within TESCO's total sales) by 20% between 1990 and 2006, after introducing such a guarantee. As a result MAFF/MPS Japan started monitoring some trial sales at various flower shops in Japan. The trial is going well and many shops showed positive outcomes, in terms of increased sales after introducing a vase life guarantee. MPS Japan won't be issuing any certificates for vase life guaranteed flowers but is focussed on doing the research and trials to promote the concept. Selling flowers with a vase life

guarantee is considered as part of the service to consumers. The risks of failure and the cost of supplying replacement flowers are the responsibility of the retailers.

MAFF and MPS Japan regularly organize conferences with key Japanese flower businesses, and conduct research to identify issues at each stage of the flower supply chain (production, wholesale, and retail in Japan) that affects the vase life guarantee system. They also develop manuals to educate supply chain members. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to increase the sale (market size) of flowers in Japan by winning the consumer's confidence. All supply chain members are required to work together to achieve maximum vase life and this is not an easy thing to achieve. According to MPS Japan's latest presentation to the industry, it suggests that retailers set guarantee periods of 5 to 7 days, depending on the results of preliminary tests at each store. The aim is to achieve a 10% increase in sales after introducing the vase life guarantee.

The vase life monitoring rooms and/or laboratories are required to be registered and to comply with the following specifications:

Room temperature is set at 25C
Relative humidity is 60%

Lighting of 1000 Lx for 12 hours (and 12 hours in the dark).



Information on the vase life guarantee system as displayed at a flower shop in Japan (Photos provided by MPS Japan)

The official vase life monitoring fee at those registered facilities is JPY 5,000 to 10,000 per variety. Leading auction markets such as FAJ, Higashi Nihon, Naniwa and Chrysal

(in Tokyo and Osaka) have their vase life monitoring rooms registered.

Kazuko thinks it's important for the Australian wildflower industry to be aware of what Japan's flower industry is doing to stimulate market demand. And could the Australian flower industry do things that are (potentially) related to supporting a vase life guarantee? Bettina Gollnow firmly believes the answer to this question is an emphatic yes! The wildflower quality specifications and supporting postharvest manual are designed to do a lot of what is being discussed – i.e. harvesting flowers at the right stage for maximum vase life, caring for them properly, using the right treatments and solutions and packing them properly. These documents were always envisaged to be the end point of a complete quality assurance scheme for flowers. The challenge now is for growers to use them as intended and for marketers (Australian exporters and overseas importers) to use them as well. However, without some kind of enforcement or auditing system to make sure people are doing this, it's difficult to give a guarantee.

If this system is more widely accepted in Japan for domestic flower sales, importers and wholesalers could follow suit. Growers in a number of countries already have systems in place to support a vase life guarantee, including the ability to track

details of picking, processing and packing dates.

Kazuko has forwarded the photos included in this article from MPS Japan and Chrysal Japan as examples of how vase life guaranteed flowers are promoted and sold at flower shops in Japan and Europe.

Kazuko will keep WFA up to date with this initiative.



Sticker showing the 7 days vase life guarantee as used at a flower shop in Japan. It says "Don't place under the direct rays of the sun and use flower food. If flowers don't last for 7 days after the date of purchase despite your following these instructions, please come back to us with the flowers and the receipt. Then we'll replace them with alternative flowers." (Image provided by MPS Japan)



Poster used by JUMBO (supermarket in the Netherlands) showing the 7 days vase life guarantee – how the flowers look in 7 days after purchasing on a Monday. This tries to encourage consumers to buy new flowers the next Monday. (Photo provided by Chrysal Japan)



Sticker for vase life guarantee (8 days) used at the supermarket Marks & Spencer in UK (Photo provided by Chrysal Japan).

Bettina's comments: MPS certification began in Europe and aims to certify that flowers have been **grown and traded with maximum care for people and the environment**. Find out more at websites like

<http://www2.flowercouncil.org/int/dynamic/news.asp?id=tcm:75-159912>

A vase life guarantee can be part of this system. A controlled supply chain is essential in order to give consumers a vase life guarantee, which typically ranges from 7 to 14 days, depending on the type of flower. This point came up during presentations at the recent Flowers 2011 Conference, and also during seminars presented in Australia by postharvest experts from Chrysal in the Netherlands. A vase life guarantee can be given with

confidence only when everyone in the chain optimises what they do, and follows written protocols. There are audits (back at the farm) to check whether flowers have been properly treated. This works because for the mainly traditional flowers that are part of this system, there are well defined postharvest treatments and Chrysal has developed 'self indicating' products (so you can test a flower stem to check whether or not it has received a certain treatment solution). The farms involved are very large operations and export focussed.

Flora Festivals – a great opportunity in more ways than one

In NSW the Australian Springtime Flora Festival held at Kariong near Gosford is a 4 day floral and garden festival in early to mid September. It attracts about 30,000 visitors from far and wide. The wildflower pavilion is a major drawcard, coordinated by Nola Parry on behalf of the Springtime Flora Festival. There has been a wildflower pavilion at the festival for some 20 years. This year, 2011, was the 25th anniversary of this festival. To celebrate, the wildflower pavilion was accented with silver backdrops and balls, and silver teamed exceptionally well with the magnificent display of wildflower arrangements. As well as showcasing the wide variety of cultivated wildflowers available, this festival shows the general public (consumers!) what really fresh, good quality wildflowers look like

and how they can be used. Such events are a great place to gauge and build public interest and awareness in wildflowers, and educate current and potential consumers.



This arrangement featured pink waratahs, introducing the general public to newer varieties available.

This is what the Australian Native Flower Growers and Promoters (ANFGP) have been doing via the festival for many years now. "These flowers capture people's imagination and give them a feeling of pride in their country - people are more discerning today and realize the importance of these flowers to birds and animals", notes Nola Parry. "They are also learning that not all wildflowers come from "Western Australia" and that every state has beautiful flowers and foliage suitable for everyday use. The display also aims to

educate the public that 'not all Proteaceae are Australian!'

'The beautiful subtleness of colour with Australian flowers always makes the display a success – they are more like a ballet and not an opera!', adds Nola, who puts in countless hours to plan a different display each year. 'The public are always captured by the natural beauty of Australian flowers and are intrigued by the beautiful large flowering *E. macrocarpa*, and they all want to grow one!'

The ANFGP also run a well stocked flower stall within the pavilion, selling Australian native wildflowers to raise funds for the Association to put towards insurance and further promotional work with Australian native flowers. This is very popular with festival visitors as they can choose their own product combinations to purchase for home use. They also ask lots of questions, like 'what Eucalyptus is that?', 'what is that black kangaroo paw?' and 'what is that fluffy thing (*Ptilotus*)', and importantly 'where can we buy these?'

A look behind the scenes...

It takes 12 to 15 people to assemble the final flower display, with some working for six hours and others putting in 12-14 hours the day before the Festival opens.

Preparation time prior to this usually takes around 5-7 days – depending on what needs to be done for props and planning. The floor area of the display is around 10M x 20M.

What products and quantities were on display?

Banksia: 500 stems including *B. hookeriana*, *B. coccinea*, *B. plagiocarpa*, *B. menziesii*, *B. occidentalis*, *B. ericifolia* 'Giant Candles', *B. praemorsa*, *B. grandis* nut, *B. baueri*, *B. attenuata* candles, *B. baxteri* pods, *B. menziesii* cones, *B. speciosa* and burnt *B. speciosa* nuts.

Isopogon latifolius and *I. cuneatus*.

Dryandra quercifolia (now *Banksia heliantha*) and *D. formosa* (now *B. formosa*).

Eucalyptus stems up to 3M long, including flowers and foliages: *E. tetragona*, *E. woodwardii*, *E. preissiana*, *E. macrocarpa*, *E. youngiana*, *E. kingsmillii*, *E. pyriformis*, *E. forrestiana*, *E. pterocarpa*, *E. tetraptera*, and *E. ficifolia* nuts.

Chamelaucium (waxflower) - 50 bunches including 12 standard and hybrid varieties.

Many other flowers as well, including *Scholtzia*, *Verticordia*, *Geleznovia*, *Eriostemon*, *Micromyrtus*, *Boronia*,

Thryptomene, *Acacia*, *Pycnosorus*, *Bracteantha*, *Hakea*, *Grevillea*, *Anigozanthos*, *Macropidia*, *Actinotus*, *Telopea*, and *Doryanthes*.

And many foliages including rainforest foliages *Athertonia* and *Grevillea baileyana*.

Supplies of the flowers and foliages are coordinated by Craig Scott from East Coast Wildflowers, brought in from WA, SA, Vic, Qld, NSW country and the NSW Central Coast to provide the largest selection of almost 100% cultivated Australian Native Wildflowers that East Coast Wildflowers can access at the time of the Flora Festival.



The well stocked flower stall allowed consumers to buy their favourites to take home.

2011 Wild about Waratahs Festival

The annual 'Wild About Waratahs Festival' is designed to celebrate the waratah and inspire the protection of the waratah in the wild. It is hosted by the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden at Mt Tomah (NSW). After 10 years, the festival is still going strong! This year's Wild about Waratahs Festival ran from Saturday 24 September through to Sunday 9 October.

This festival is another example of a successful collaboration between commercial wildflower growers and a major organisation like the Botanic Garden, which allows the messages about cultivated wildflowers to reach a much broader audience. It also enjoys the support of major sponsors Proteaflora, East Coast Wildflowers and the Wildflower Industry Network NSW Inc. The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden has an extensive collection of waratah species, selections and hybrids, as well as related genera like *Alloxylon pinnatum* (the Dorrigo waratah), *Oreocallis grandiflora* (from Peru and Ecuador) and *Embothrium coccineum* (the Notro or Chilean Firebush). The association is fitting as the waratah was first described by Robert Brown in 1810, from a plant growing in the Blue Mountains.



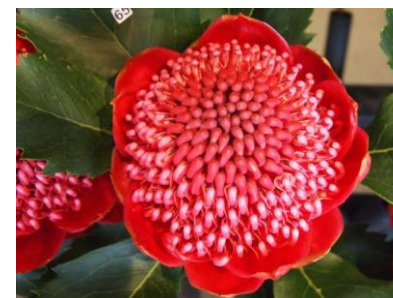
Complementing the blooms competition were magnificent flower arrangements created by Steve Vella, who is a horticulturist at the gardens.

The program included a state-wide Waratah bloom competition and display, Waradah Goomedah (Darug for Waratah Spirit) - an Indigenous art exhibition inspired by the waratah, growing advice, a National Parks and Wildlife guided walk, and guided tours of the waratah collection in the garden. Local school children entered their artworks depicting the waratah. Visitors were able to buy fresh waratah blooms and potted plants. There was also a local waratah farm open day.

The Blooms Competition is a popular part of the festival, with commercial growers entering their blooms in several categories.

The competition is coordinated by WFA member and Secretary of the Wildflower Industry Network NSW Inc Frank Allatt. The blooms display was put together by Frank and Ros Allatt, Peter Abell and Louise Saarinen.

Below are the names of the winning entrants and the names of those who submitted blooms that received Highly Commended status. The judges Tony Foster and Bettina Gollnow had a difficult time determining the outcomes, assessing the 89 entries against a range of criteria including shape, colour, condition, and size. They were extremely impressed with both the quality of the blooms and the range of blooms entered.



- Competition champion bloom: No. 65 – Fire and Brimstone. Grower: Gavin Bottomley (photo above)
- Winner Seedling: No. 36 – Red. Grower: Craig Scott – East Coast Wildflowers
- Winner Cultivar: No. 74 – Passion. Grower: Acacia Hill Flower Farm

- Winner Hybrid: No. 24 – Clarence Pink. Grower: Gordon Meiklejohn - Brimstone Waratahs

- Highly Commended:

No. 3 – B5. Grower: Neville Julian – Karambi Orchard

No. 22 – Tutu. Grower: Gordon Meiklejohn - Brimstone Waratahs

No. 50 – Carousel. Grower: Imbi Chad - Exquisite Wildflowers

No. 64 – Other Cultivar. Grower: Gavin Bottomley

No. 68 – Stringers Late. Grower: Acacia Hill Flower Farm

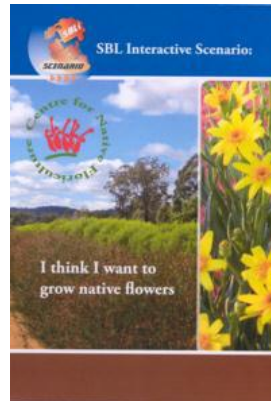
No. 79 – Georgie Girl. Grower: Frank & Ros Allatt - Gadara Wildflowers

Passion to Profit magazine, Oct/Nov 2011 is out!

Click [HERE](#) to read the magazine

Interactive scenarios – worth a look at a new location

Some readers will be aware of the interactive scenarios developed by Margaret Cover at the Centre for Native Floriculture between 2008 and 2010. There are five of them and they have found a new home on the SBLi Public Server. Go to <http://scenarios.sblinteractive.org/v2/main/PlayerFrame.aspx> and type the name of the scenario of interest to you into the search box. These details are also available on the WFA website under ‘Business News’.



‘I think I want to grow native flowers’



‘Why do good flowers go bad?’



‘Smart Marketing – the way to success’



‘Developing new plants for the market’



‘Managing pests & diseases in a native flower plantation’

Wildlife licensing, grower licensing, tagging

Several members have brought up issues and frustrations in relation to this area. There are state licensing issues that impact on growers being able to sell certain products harvested from native species. There are also Federal requirements in relation to exporting.

The WFA board discussed this at the August board meeting and has agreed to do what it can to improve the current situation for growers and marketers.

As a first step, Bettina is collating information from industry – specific issues and examples, general comments, frustrations etc – please email management@wildflowersaustralia.com.au (Bettina is happy to call you to discuss this. She has been ‘digging around’ in this area since 1995 and is well aware of the problems and inflexible viewpoints in some quarters).

The board will review this feedback and plan a strategy to try and improve the current situation. WFA needs to get a national perspective and also understand specific state issues.

Just received is the following information from the Federal Department of Sustainability,

Environment, Water, Population and Communities: you may want to check if the proposals will affect your business.

An independent review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation has been undertaken by Dr Allan Hawke. This is the first review of the EPBC Act since its commencement on 16 July 2000. In accordance with section 522A of the Act and its terms of reference, the review assessed the operation of the EPBC Act and the extent to which its objects have been achieved.

Community participation in the review was encouraged and there were opportunities for public input over the course of the review. The [Final Report](#) was delivered to the Minister on 30 October 2009 and publicly released on 21 December 2009.

The federal Government recently released its response to this independent review, outlining how it intends to reform the EPBC Act to improve environmental and economic outcomes for everyone.

The extent of the reform package is considerable and as such the Department is exploring the options for recovering the costs of administering the EPBC Act and

funding the reforms to the EPBC Act in a manner consistent with the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.

In mid September, the department released a consultation paper on potential cost recovery for a range of activities under the EPBC Act. **The public consultation process is open for 6 weeks and closes on 31 October 2011.** The cost recovery consultation paper can be accessed at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/consultation-draft-cost-recovery.html> and there is more information at <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/reform/>.

This consultation process is targeted towards those stakeholders regulated or otherwise affected by the EPBC Act and, among others, may include **business and industry groups, and importers and exporters of flora and their products.**

The cost recovery paper proposes amendments to existing cost recovery fees, as well as the introduction of new cost recovery for some activities, including pre-cites certificates, certificates of origin, wildlife trade operations and approved captive breeding programs, **artificial propagation programs** and aquaculture programs. Information on wildlife trade regulation including details of current

proposed full cost recovery fees can be found starting on page 34 of the cost recovery consultation paper (see <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/consultation-draft-cost-recovery.html>).

Dimethoate update - dimethoate products suspended as of 6 October 2011
As foreshadowed in last month's newsletter, the APVMA has now issued a notice of suspension to registrants of all products containing dimethoate on the basis of short term dietary risks. This is an interim regulatory action while further assessments on the chemical are completed.

During the suspension period:

- use of dimethoate on certain horticultural crops, including fruit fly treatments of many fruits and vegetables is prohibited. Use on all food producing plants in the home garden is also prohibited. This applies to dimethoate products and permits. A list of suspended crop uses is available on the APVMA website.
- possession and use on some crops can continue provided the products are supplied with the new instructions for use.
- people cannot supply or deal with any of these products *unless* they apply the new instructions for use. The new instructions for use are available on the APVMA website

and will also be provided by product registrants and resellers.

- it is an offence to advertise or promote the use of these suspended products, although the publication of information related to the suspension itself is not an offence.

The suspension period is 12 months, ending on 5 October 2012.

New instructions for use of suspended products have been included in two permits [PER 13155 Agricultural products](#) and [13156 home garden](#). PER13155 includes some ornamental plants and wildflower crops. A pdf of both permits is available on the WFA website in the member's only section. Remember that if you use dimethoate, you need to keep a copy of the current permit on file.

More information

Information on alternatives to dimethoate, quarantine arrangements and frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the suspension are available on the [dimethoate review webpage](#). If you have any questions about the suspension action, please contact the Chemical Review Contact Officer via (02) 6210 4749 or chemicalreview@apvma.gov.au.

(This information is reproduced with permission from the APVMA).

Brand Australia campaign

Austrade has been in touch with WFA about new developments in the Building Brand Australia Program. They are seeking further engagement with industry leaders and organisations such as WFA who can partner with them to project a more contemporary and unified image of Australia internationally.

This might mean using the Australia Unlimited Brand. Or, it might mean being part of their international media and PR campaign by providing great stories from our industry and /or organisation.

Austrade are working with Shayne Mallard from Statecraft, the organisation appointed to coordinate the brand engagement sessions and also develop international public relations opportunities for select organisations like WFA.

Seminars are being held to explore the benefits of using the Australia Unlimited brand. Seminar sessions will be held in Sydney (Wed 2nd November), Brisbane (Fri 4th November), Canberra (Tues 8th November) and Melbourne (Fri 11th November) from 10am to noon in each city. An RSVP is required.

In conjunction with the branding campaign, Austrade is offering an exciting public relations service at no cost to

participants, providing international media placement and the new Australia Unlimited magazine and related iPad App, targeting international audiences. The resources available to organisations such as WFA and their members through the international public relations campaign could be significant. Statecraft is teamed with the highly regarded global PR firm Bell Pottinger. Their goal is to discover great stories of Australian innovation in the key areas of science, business, technology, creativity, education, leadership, governance and good will amongst organisations and take them to the world. This will in effect promote an organisation's capability whilst showcasing Australian talent and building Brand Australia.

Please direct your enquiries (including registration for the seminars) to Shayne Mallard or Jonathon Moore at Statecraft on 02 8080 0060.

Finding wildflower product and fellow growers

Anyone is able to use the search function of the WFA website to locate a specific product and WFA members who grow it. Here's how - go to the WildFlowers Australia website as follows, <http://www.wildflowersaustralia.com.au/membership/supply-chain-members/grower> and enter the product name, e.g. "Waratah" in the Search box.

It is important for you as a member to keep your listing on the website **up to date**, so you don't miss an opportunity! We have noted some gremlins at work, so please remember to check your information regularly. If you can't work out how to do this, please contact management@wildflowersaustralia.com.au for help.

Australia Plant Hardiness Zone Map

Please click onto the link to find the map and an explanation.
<http://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/research/hort.research/zones.html>



Flowers 2011 – The Australian Flower Conference report published

This RIRDC report highlights the presentations made by Bettina Gollnow at the Flowers 2011 Conference and introduces the trade booth set up to disseminate the wildflower quality specifications and postharvest manual (both outcomes of

RIRDC project PRJ-000331: Quality Specifications for Australian Wildflowers and the revised Manual of Postharvest Treatments for Wildflowers). It also summarises the key messages from the conference speakers, who addressed the conference theme of 'working together...to race to the top', especially as they apply to the Australian wildflower industry. Some of the information included in this report has already been shared with the wildflower industry through the WFA newsletter.

This report will be of interest to members of the Australian wildflower industry, especially growers, marketers and florists, and the wider Australian flower industry.

Details:

30 pages

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 [Download PDF](#) 403.6 KB

A print copy is available from RIRDC for \$25.00 – go to

<https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/>

Wattle Day

The Wattle Day Association is a non-profit organisation that organises Wattle Day on 1 September every year. The organisation is run by a committee of volunteers, and also

actively promotes the wattle as Australia's national floral emblem and unifying symbol for all Australians.

See the Association's website (www.wattleday.asn.au) for useful facts about wattles, how to grow them and what the flower means for Australia and Australians.

Flower term of the month



Leaf blackening in king protea (photo reproduced courtesy of NSW Primary Industries).

What's leaf blackening about? In some cut flowers the leaves become unacceptably black after harvest. This is common in some *Protea* species and is probably caused by the withdrawal of sugar from the leaves to the flowers. It sometimes occurs in riceflower (*Ozothamnus diosmifolius*) if they've been held at high temperatures or if it's been raining during harvest, in *Ixodia* that have been damaged and in *Backhousia myrtifolia*. It sometimes occurs as a result of chilling injury.

Reprinted with acknowledgement from *Postharvest Handling of Australian Flowers from Australian Native Plants and Related Species. A Practical Manual*. Second edition by John Faragher, Bettina Gollnow and Daryl Joyce November 2010 RIRDC Publication No. 10/027 RIRDC Project No. PRJ-000331

You can find more on leaf blackening and recommended sugar concentrations and treatments in the manual – see page 45. Go to:

<https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/items/10-027>

Events and diary dates

November 5: Wildflower Industry Network NSW Inc. meeting

A visit to the Plant Breeding Institute (PBI) of The University of Sydney, hosted by Graham Brown, Horticulture Development Manager.

Address: 107 Cobbitty Rd, Cobbitty NSW 2570 (near Camden).

Program:

10.30 am Arrival and morning tea

11.00 am Inspection of the facility

12.15 pm Lunch – bring your own

1.00 pm Talk and discussion on the work of the PBI and recent projects.

2.30 pm WIN meeting and update.

If you are planning to attend, please notify the WIN Secretary, Frank Allatt on 02 4567 2093, email: fallatt@bigpond.net.au

December 15-18: Flower Show Istanbul, Turkey: Plants, Landscape and Sub-industries Specialization Fair.

Details at

<http://www.flowershow.com.tr/en/about-fair>

March 28 –April 3, 2012: Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show.

The organisers advise exhibitors to register early for next year's event, which is ranked as one of the top 5 flower shows in the world. Over 110,000 visitors attend.

Download an application form at

www.melbflowershow.com.au

April 22-26, 2012: International Protea Association (IPA) Conference -16th IPA Conference and XIth International Protea Working Group Symposium. Santa Cruz, Chile. View more details at <http://www.ipa-protea.org/events/chile-invitation>

October 10-12, 2012. IFEX 2012, Asia's largest flower industry trade show: see <http://www.ifex.jp/en>. Venue: Makuhari Messe, Japan.



Changing your contact details?

Please let us know.

If you are changing your email, contact phone number or moving to a new address, please let Sylvia Gleeson at the WFA Secretariat know (contact details below).

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If you wish to join WFA to receive the newsletter, weekly update emails and other member's only benefits, please go to the website - www.wildflowersaustralia.com.au - and complete a membership application.

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