

Wildflowers

BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April – May 2017



WILD FLOWERS
AUSTRALIA

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Pest and disease management seminar attracts enthusiastic participation

Our grower seminar on managing pests and diseases in wildflower crops was well attended. Held on March 21 at the Australian Botanic Garden, Mt Annan, this was the final activity of the WFA/RIRDC communications and capacity building project.

The excellent venue also allowed delegates to hear about the Australian Botanic Garden and PlantBank from Curator Manager John Siemon and enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour led by Dr Cathy Offord. It was also an opportunity embraced by horticultural staff at the garden to update their knowledge, with 7 attending.



Andrew Manners examines a crop sample brought in by one of the participants

The 38 participants were mostly commercial wildflower growers (19), but also nine nursery and ornamental plant growers. Five people from the Federal Dept of Agriculture in Canberra attended to update themselves on how the industry manages pests and diseases (they work in the biosecurity). The guest speakers along with a horticulturist from NSW

DPI completed the numbers. Attendees came from WA, Victoria, NSW, the ACT and Qld.

All three technical experts provided a wealth of information, from their various perspectives, but complementing each other's messages. We thank them again for their time and expertise.

New and future developments

Opening speaker Gary Leeson from Organic Crop Protectants used the concept of the pest and disease triangle as the basis for discussing new developments in pest and disease management. The triangle represents the interplay between the host plant, the environment and the pest or disease agent – and this determines whether or not growers have a problem to deal with. Maintaining healthy plants is the key and Gary mentioned macro and micro nutrients and different methods of applying fertilisers. He then discussed the concept of 'plant immune system augmentation' and practical ways growers can foster this in their plants. High biodiversity in and around the crop is the key to minimising insect pest problems, and Gary outlined results of various trials in this field. He then turned to bioinsecticides, giving a range of examples that are working in cropping systems.

As well as developing and marketing a range of these products in Australia, OCP also sells monitoring and trapping systems and Gary demonstrated how one of them works.

Key to reducing disease impacts is to increase beneficial organisms and biodiversity, and decrease stress on the crop plants. An increasing range of biorational products are available to manage plant diseases. Research into soil biofumigation begun decades ago is

now becoming mainstream. There is even research to work out how to harness bees as vectors of biological control agents throughout an area of crop. Fungal metabolites are also being tested as postharvest treatments, with fewer human health impacts than conventional fungicides.

Pest management

Senior entomologist Dr Andrew Manners is with the Qld Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. He shared simple and common sense approaches which all growers need to adopt as the cornerstone in pest management. This starts with good hygiene. Andrew also referred to the pest and disease triangle, giving timely reminders about crop management practices that shift the balance in favour of the crop plants and keep them healthy.

He then turned to IPM and the importance of monitoring, stressing that 'you want to know, before you do something, that it works'. Several growers in the audience shared their experiences with monitoring and how they record their information. Quite a range of things can be monitored, from pest populations through to water quality and disinfestation, nutrition regimes and predator/parasite populations in the crop. Andrew had some great photos of insects on sticky traps and advised on how to identify what you see on them. He recommended that all growers have and use a hand lens, preferably 18X magnification, and also a microscope, to help them see and recognise pests up close.

Next Andrew spoke about pesticides, giving a very helpful explanation of product labels and specific information there that growers will find helpful. He also gave suggestions about

searching for labels and permits and referred to several sources of such information.

As the wildflower industry grows Australian native species and their close relatives, there will be many native pests, but also native predators and beneficial insects. Andrew advised growers to harness this by reducing use of broad spectrum chemicals and being careful about what parts of the plant they spray.

Andrew took participants on a 'walk through' the world of insects and mites, with an outline of the basic 'body plan' and basic types of lifecycles, before discussing each group in detail: moths and butterflies, beetles, flies, aphids, thrips, scale insects, mealy bugs, psyllids, leaf hoppers, spiders and mites. For each group, Andrew discussed their biology, management and control strategies, with an emphasis on non-chemical methods and 'reduced risk' pesticides. Andrew concluded with advice on how to produce a pest management plan that works.

Managing diseases

Senior plant pathologist Dr Len Tesoriero from NSW DPI focussed his presentation on plant diseases. He covered best practices to achieve successful disease management, highlighting the key aspects of a good plant health management plan and how diseases can affect plant growth. He presented several case studies in disease management, including *Phytophthora* root rot in boronias, tomato spotted wilt virus in native species and *Pythium* and *Fusarium* rot of flannel flowers.

Like Gary and Andrew, he noted the interaction of various factors and plant diseases and spoke about the role of the pathogen lifecycle in disease management.

He gave tips on how growers can work out if a product will work for them for a particular problem, important for the wildflower industry 'because there are lots of different crops and not a lot of research being done, so growers have to work out how to manage problems for themselves'.



Fungal leaf spots like this can make wildflower products unmarketable

There was a useful overview of different fungicides and how they work, and an outline of 'soft' fungicides and new chemistry products derived from microbial secretions. Len noted that there are still 'many knowledge gaps' and 'hazy areas' and said growers must decide if use of certain products is commercially affordable.

He shared much useful information about biocontrols, and their common modes of

action, but also their limitations. In advising growers about how to overcome some of these, Len stressed that he sees biocontrols as one part of integrated crop management, rather than as a substitute for fungicides. He said lots of such products are entering Australia, but noted that in his research trials to date 'products fail more often than they are effective'.

Len also spoke about several exotic disease threats, including exotic *Phytophthora* species and strains, rusts from the guava rust group and bacteria from the *Xylella fastidiosa* group. He noted that Australia averages one to 2 exotic pest or disease outbreaks each year (see the link to more information in the box on page 4). We appear to lack a targeted monitoring and surveillance approach. 'The organisms concerned are not static but evolving all the time' he said, adding that 'we are helping this as we move produce around the world and bring previously unconnected species into contact with each other'.

A lively Q&A session allowed attendees to get more information on specific pest or disease approaches or problems encountered on their farms.

PlantBank

Concluding the day was a tour of PlantBank hosted by Cathy Offord. At its core (literally) is the seed vault which currently holds over 5000 species, or about 50% of NSW species. It's a fully integrated science and educational building, with laboratory areas featuring large windows so the visiting public can 'see the science happening'. The plantings around the building

have been designed to complement the research undertaken within and 'get people thinking about plants to raise their interest'.

It took 30 years from first concept to achieving the final building, which is an 'ecobuilding' that has won several major awards.



Cath Offord led the behind-the-scenes tour of PlantBank

A strong research focus on rainforest species is developing techniques focussed on threatened and high value species. Another focus is seed dormancy and understanding the different types and how to overcome them. Cathy explained in detail the process of seed collecting in the wild and the steps followed to prepare the seed for storage. Links between the Garden and many other research institutions, along with development of new techniques, is providing more research opportunities than ever before.

Feedback

Delegate feedback via the evaluations was very positive and they very much appreciated the knowledge shared by our speakers. General comments included:

- 'Nice to see a range of views presented'
- 'We need more presentations like this!'
- 'Loved the presenters!'
- 'A lot of the information needs another day'.

Many provided feedback on their current pest and disease management strategies as well as changes they'd make as result of the day. Sixteen growers who completed the evaluation said they already have monitoring in place (although for some it's 'passive' or very basic) while 7 growers don't monitor. Twelve said they had difficulty knowing how best to manage pests and diseases on their farm or nursery, but an equal number said they had no problems in this area.

| |
|--|
| Main pests identified by attendees as needing management: |
| Scale including waratah scale: 8 growers Psyllids: 5 growers (2 from same farm) Borers, stem borers (waratahs, banksias), sawfly larvae: 8 growers (2 from same farm) Mealy bugs: 2 growers Two spotted mites: 2 growers Other pests (affecting one grower): Curl grubs, birds, wattle bug, aphids, fungus gnats, thrips, caterpillars. |
| Main diseases identified as needing management: |
| Phytophthora: 5 growers Pythium: 2 growers Alternaria: 2 growers (same farm) Elsinoe scab: 2 growers (same farm) Fungal diseases on eucalypts (on leaves, flower buds): 1 grower Myrtle rust: 1 grower Rhizoctonia: 1 grower Unspecified fungal disease: 2 growers |

Most (13) already use biologicals as part of their disease management; 10 said they didn't but 8 were interested in trialling them.

Most wanted to get better at monitoring (10 people), keep better records (2 people) and introduce IPM (2 people). Others planned to change from broad spectrum pesticides to IPM, get better at planning, put in place more preventative actions, spend more time enriching the soil, look into trialling new products mentioned, do more microbial brewing, or introduce more biological controls.

New things they learnt about included the wide variety of conditions needed to have a useful IPM program in place, and that holistic and IPM systems are scientifically valid approaches for growers to reduce pests and diseases in crops. Several learnt much about biological factors affecting pests and diseases and that more research into biological controls and their potential to replace chemical pest control is needed. Others heard for the first time about evolution and hybridisation of diseases.

Others discovered biofungicides and other new chemicals, and learnt that pesticides are only upwardly mobile, and about use of cover crops and decoy crops and refuge plants for beneficials. They found out more about pests, that 'prevention is better than control', they need to keep better records, 'that I don't know enough' and that they need to get a good hand lens. Many made useful new personal contacts.

Fourteen respondents said they are concerned about the comparatively small range of pesticides registered for use on wildflowers/native plants, and 8 said they would personally contribute funds towards securing new minor use permits from the APVMA to access new products.

[Future technical seminars will be run by WFA based on demand and on a full cost recovery basis].

The link below provides information on recent biosecurity outbreaks in Australia, both pests and diseases.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-02-20/biosecurity-outbreaks-in-australia-a-short-history/8280634>



WFA future directions - results of member survey

During April WFA members were invited to complete a survey to help set the future directions for member services and WFA activities. This was because funds available to deliver these services will be significantly reduced after May 2017, when the current communications and capacity building project, funded by RIRDC and WFA, finishes. While it was great to get 24 replies, many of the questions were answered by an average of 17 participants - this summary and conclusions are the best we could achieve from these replies.

The WFA board is currently reviewing the survey results in light of the funds available and will advise members shortly on which activities will be continued.

Magazine and newsletter

62.5% of members wish to keep receiving *Australian Flower Industry* magazine (published bimonthly) as part of their membership package. 68.75% said it's very important that news or articles about wildflowers and the

wildflower industry are included in this magazine. Two members wanted industry information included in AFI magazine instead of having a newsletter, but this isn't a workable option as we'd get access to very limited space.

88.24% of members enjoy reading the WFA Newsletter, currently published 6 times a year. 68.75% of members said it's very important for WildFlowers Australia to offer a newsletter to its members, while the remainder think it's somewhat important.

This is the type of information they like to read about:

- Industry news and issues 100%
- Upcoming events 87.5%
- Research updates 75%
- Pest, disease & weed management 68.75%
- Details about new publications 62.5%
- Floristry competition 50%
- Flower of the month profile 31.25%.

Most respondents (52.9%) want the newsletter to continue as a quarterly publication, the next highest choice running close behind at bimonthly as it is now (47%). There were tied votes for the number of pages – 35.3% voted for 6 pages and the same for 10.

While the communications project was running, it was a RIRDC requirement to make newsletters public after a month, but this will not be required after May. A greater number of members (35.3%) did not want the newsletter to be available to non members, closely followed by equal numbers of members happy to have

the newsletter available to non members or available in a redacted form (23.5% each).

This means the newsletter will continue, featuring around 8 pages of information, but it will be available only to members of WFA after this issue.

Floristry competition

In regard to the annual National Student Floristry competition, most members (64.7%) feel it is very important that WFA continues to run this competition. Industry sponsors cover the costs of managing the competition, the certificates, and prizes. Most members (41.2%) felt that if insufficient sponsorship is raised, the value of prizes should be reduced to fit the budget, rather than not running the competition at all or subsidising the shortfall from members' funds (there were equal votes for these options at 29.4%).

Walking on the wildside

There was strong support for continuing the annual event 'Walking on the wildside' - farm walk and demonstration for florists (64.7%). Although the costs of hosting this event are largely covered by participant registrations, most members (70.6%) are happy for a modest shortfall to be met by members' funds, so as not to disappoint the participants by cancelling it.

One member commented that it would be good to see 'Walking on the Wildside' hosted twice a year, nationally, hopefully to also earn revenue for WFA. The Board has certainly discussed holding this event in a state other than NSW. To date registration fees and sponsorship have barely covered the costs, so

there has been no profit. Taking this event elsewhere increases the costs, meaning that a higher registration fee has to be charged, and we're not sure that florists and floral artists would be happy to pay much more. Local help would be needed to make it work, so if members in states other than NSW would like to come on board please contact Bettina. We'd need local help to generate lists of potential florist participants and local helpers (to find a suitable venue, local demonstrators, coordinate supply of product, help run the day etc).

As reported in the last newsletter, support for subsidised regional activities funded by the communications project over the past 6 years was mostly too little to pay the bills. From now on WFA can't afford to subsidise events. Even when an event is cancelled, significant costs have been incurred in organising it. And cancelling events is generally 'bad PR'.

The WFA website

The survey provided much useful feedback on the website. Most respondents (47.1%) log onto the website every few months, and 23.5% log on each month. Most log onto the WFA website to search for information (62.5%), check for news (56.3%), check event details (50%), for inspiring arrangement ideas (12.5%) and to see posts on the floristry competition (6.3%). A clear majority of those who responded to this question (82.4%) think WFA should continue to host a website for the direct benefits to members as well as providing information to others in the wider community.

The sort of information they would like to see there includes:

Information about conferences and events (85.7%)

Technical information and articles e.g. list of current Pesticide Minor Use Permits (78.6%)

Industry newsletters (78.6%)

Direct links to RIRDC and other key publications (71.4%)

Charts of completed R&D projects and where to find the reports (71.4%)

Information for florists – e.g. wildflowers by season (64.3%)

Find a supplier section – so you can list your business and what you sell (50%)

Floristry competition promotion and entries (50%)

A 'Members only' section (42.3%)

Links to the cost calculator and wildflower crop budgets (34.7%)

Floristry competition – results of previous competitions and info on current competition (34.7%)

Given that the current website is based on an old template which is not cost effective to update and which lacks a 'search' function, members were asked what types of website upgrade they would be keen to support from members' funds. Most (47.1%) were in favour of allocating funds to rebuild it much more simply without a members only section, with the next favoured option being to rebuild it on a modern platform with members only information (35.3%). One person wanted a new website to be 'fairly static', which presumably means it has basic information that isn't changed much.

If WFA were not to develop its own completely new website, most members (88.2%) supported the addition of wildflower technical information to FAQI knowledge centre, which offers a search option and is publically accessible.

Most members (46.7%) do not receive enquiries/orders via their business listing on the website. About one third do get such contacts, mostly once a year, or every 6 months.

Email updates

These are an efficient way of sharing information received by WFA by email if it can't be held over to the next newsletter. Most members (58.8%) said it's 'somewhat important' to them to receive update emails from WFA, while 23.5% said it's very important.

As the national industry body, WFA also receives and responds to enquiries on behalf of the industry, e.g. people (local or from overseas) wanting to source product, requests for help from potential growers, requests for information about the industry. Most members (52.9%) think it's very important that WFA does this while 41.2% think it's 'somewhat important'.

Facebook

Most members (81.3%) said it's very to somewhat important that WFA hosts a Facebook page. Most (66.7%) want information to be posted weekly, but this is not affordable. Most members (64.7%) already have a personal or business Facebook account.

Many members are in favour of creating a closed group on Facebook where members can read industry updates, share ideas and communicate in a private forum. This will be happening! As one member put it, 'Facebook is a great medium to keep the industry updated with what is happening in the regions, new products, product seasons, when to expect products to be available, weather affected products or disasters, just a general newsy page to educate and inform in a friendly way'.

Industry surveys

Most members supported WFA conducting surveys to gather information about the industry and current local and export market conditions. Several surveys have been run in recent years, to gather information about production and domestic and export markets. Others have collected information on pest and disease issues facing growers of wildflower crops. Such surveys are a way of providing industry data to industry members, but also government departments, researchers and potential suppliers to industry.

Most felt this activity was 'somewhat important' (52.9%) or very important (41.2%). More members reported participating in recent surveys (domestic market and export market) in 2015 and 2016 (50%, and 56.3% respectively) and most (87.5%) found the survey results interesting. Reasons for not participating included the survey not being relevant to their business (nearly 43%), a lack of time (28.6%), and finding it too hard to find required details for their business (14.3%).

In future, surveys are likely to be run less frequently, if at all.

Grower networking events

These are very important and rightly need a strong focus, from WFA and from industry members. Most members (58.8%) wanted WFA to continue to arrange a **grower technical seminar/farm walk**, with most wanting it once a year (73.3%), while 26.7% wanted one every 2 years.

Most (76.5%) have attended these events in the past, with 2 members noting they'd attended 3 in total and two others attending a total of 2 events. One person noted that it's too expensive to attend events from WA.

Almost 53% of members said it's 'somewhat important' that WFA hosts a **national industry conference**, while 35.3% felt it is very important that this event happens. Most (66.7%) wanted a national conference to be held every 2 years and over 94% thought that current member's discounts on registrations for events are adequate.

The board will be looking at organising future events in a simpler and more cost effective way.

In regard to the frequency of WFA board meetings (which have typically been held by teleconference every 2 months), most members were happy for the board members to decide how often to meet, based on need. This is likely to be less frequent from now on to save money.

There were also interesting comments from 11 members in the final feedback field, which allowed them to comment on how they see WFA's role, moving on into the future, or to share their ideas or give other feedback.

One member said 'we need a coordinated body for promotion, lobbying and support of members and the industry'. Another that 'WFA's role should be that of guardian, mentor and promoter of Australian wildflowers to the general public. WFA needs to actively explore and encourage grower hubs/co-operatives

selling, educating and promoting Australian wildflowers direct to the end user at regional, district/ suburban farmers markets. If enough growers sold, educated and promoted Australian wildflowers direct to the public we would create a top of mind awareness that will produce sustainable, profitable sales at a price point the grower determines'.

Very true and hopefully all industry members are active in this area and will consider more interaction with buyers and consumers. However, current membership numbers do not provide the income needed for WFA to coordinate such a program. The floristry competition and 'wildside' also play a part in this focus.

Another member noted that it was important to them that WFA acted 'as a peak body, with information made available to all stakeholders in a timely fashion. They wanted WFA to utilise affiliated organisations more effectively, hoping they may be able to help maintain services and minimise costs'.

This in fact is what WFA has been aiming to do, particularly in the last 6 years while the communications project was running, with a regular newsletter, events and a website brimming with information. Another member felt that WFA should become part of a larger and active industry body to be seen as part of the whole Australian flower industry. Well in recent years WFA has been working closely with other flower industry associations, especially FAQI, before that with New Rural Industries Australia, until it folded. We've become involved in biosecurity issues, country of origin labelling,

pesticide access and wildlife licensing issues, to name a few.

In addition, WFA values its association members - the Flower Association of Qld, the Wildflower Industry Network of NSW and GrandiFlora Growers – and information and cooperation flow between these groups. In the end it's 'people power' that builds and drives a vibrant industry. The value of active local grower networks is huge – but they need support from local growers and people need to put their hands up to help coordinate activities. Sadly over the years, these networks have dwindled in number. With many board members now serving for 10 years(!), it would be great to see others taking on this role to give them a break.

Another member rightly surmised that low membership numbers seem to be an issue, restricting what WFA can do for its members and the wider industry. WFA has tried hard to reach more members, but several membership drives have only attracted a few.

This member also asked if the industry could support a levy in some form. This is an extremely divisive issue in a number of horticultural industries, and the flower industry is no different! In fact we've heard that some wildflower growers have resisted joining WFA because they think this will 'push them into paying a levy'. As reported in the last newsletter, RIRDC and other research and development corporations have now 'walked away' from the wildflower (and wider flower) industry because there are no mechanisms (levies) in place to collect funds from across the industry to fund R&D, extension and promotion. So, this leaves industry members to fund what they need for themselves! While they are doing this individually, working

together is the only way to deal with the 'big' issues.

If you have any further thoughts or suggestions about WFA and its future directions, please get in touch with Bettina so they can be passed on to the WFA board.

MIFGS 2017

Bettina Gollnow visited MIFGS this year (at her own expense rather than WFAs). The Exhibition Building was again a glorious showcase of flowers and floral artistry, perhaps on a slightly less expansive scale compared to the year before, and with fewer wildflowers used. Obvious 'weeds' like pampas grass and asparagus fern were again present and not all flowers stayed hydrated during the 5 days of the event, despite the weather being cooler this year. Interflora also hosted several keenly contested competitions during the show.



MIFGS 2017 attracted over 101,000 visitors.

Members of Flowers Victoria are to be congratulated for their 'Grower Glasshouse' section, where videos telling grower stories were playing. These were to launch the Flowers Victoria YouTube channel and gave visitors to the show an insight into the challenges of flower

growing, how flowers are grown and harvested, and how this has changed over the years. The videos also highlighted the family histories behind each business and shone the spotlight on locally grown product.

Key messages included - 'Dedicated to excellence,' 'Committed to sustainability' and 'People need to be more aware of where their flowers are coming from'.



The RMIT Bachelor of Fashion students again created a sensational display with their mannequins dressed in flowers and foliage (above is the winning entry by Grace Cooper). This year the theme was: 'Offshoots – inspired by Viktor and Rolf'. By way of explanation, Dutch fashion designers Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren have gained acclaim for their witty approach to couture; the National Gallery of Victoria recently hosted a 4 month exhibition showcasing the label's most innovative designs.

Entrants in the Intermediate student floral competition created a table setting for two, while the Advanced student competition required entrants to create a floral design around the theme of 'Opening a new business'.



A table setting for two. 'Welcome to Australia' by Emma Lane



'Opening a new business' - detail of an arrangement to promote 'Banksia waterfront – exclusive beachside apartments' by Adele Robertson, Melbourne Polytechnic.



The 'Sky full of blooms' competition was a chance for flower growers and suppliers to team up with florists and floral designers to create interesting aerial displays, many presenting flowers from a new perspective.

Floristry competition 2017

WFA is looking forward to hosting another great national student floristry competition this year, thanks to our generous industry partners whose sponsorship supports the competition.

This year we decided to open the design inspiration and theme and allow each entrant to choose something that means something to them personally. The entry is to be a table centrepiece, arranged in base medium, appropriate for a special occasion or event. This arrangement will sit on a round or rectangular table that seats 10 to 12 people. The table cloth may be white or black. We are suggesting that it may be a good idea to have an appropriately set table, to display the arrangement so as to demonstrate its size and suitability. This can also be used to stage the centrepiece for the photographs that are submitted with each entry.

Students will choose the container and may also include accessories or embellishments to depict the theme, none of which should over dominate the design. The emphasis of the design must be on the flowers and foliage, not the container, accessories and/or the embellishments.

There will again be two categories. Students must choose which category they will compete in and submit only one design.

Category 1. At least 75% of the total plant material used in the design must be flowers and foliage from species tracing their origins to either Australia or South Africa; up to 25% may be traditional/exotic or tropical flowers. Category 2. 'Purely Australian'. Designs using only Australian native flower and foliage products (species endemic to Australia).

As in previous years, anyone studying floristry at Certificate III level at TAFE and private floristry colleges which are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), may enter through their teacher.

This year, we plan to announce the winners earlier, during Australian Flowers Week, which runs from September 16 to 24.

The 2017 sponsors are:

- Platinum:
East Coast Wildflowers
The Flower Association of Queensland Inc
- Gold:
FlowerHQ

- Silver:

The Australian Flower Investment Company (AFIC)
Civil and Structural Engineering Design Services Pty Ltd
Helix Australia
Premium Greens Australia
The Wildflower Industry Network NSW Inc.

Exotic pest alert: tomato-potato psyllid

This pest was detected for the first time in Australia in the Perth metropolitan area in February but the pest has spread into regional areas of WA. Quarantine zones were put in place by the WA government, and other states have import restrictions in place for host plants and fruit entering from WA.



The tomato-potato psyllid (TPP, *Bactericera cockerel*, see photo above) feeds mainly on plants in the Solanaceae (potato) family (tomatoes, potatoes, capsicums, chillis, tamarillos and eggplants to name a few) and the Convolvulaceae (sweet potatoes, goji berry). Overseas where it occurs (e.g. the US, Central America and New Zealand), it's regarded as a significant production pest.

Damage caused by the psyllids includes yellowing, stunting and distortion of leaves and fruit. A second concern is that TPP can vector the plant disease known as zebra chip (*Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum*), which

affects potatoes. To date there has been no detection of this associated bacterium in Australia.

Adult psyllids look like a very small cicada due to the way they hold their wings at an angle over their body, and are the size of an aphid (2-3 mm long). They produce honeydew which makes the leaves sticky and it looks dirty. They tend to jump and fly when their host plants are disturbed. Christmas bush growers are all too familiar with the challenges of managing psyllid pests.

While TPP is unlikely to affect wildflower crops, if you grow vegies or ornamental plants from the susceptible host families, please keep checking them and investigate any unusual symptoms.

Last month, technical experts agreed that it is no longer technically feasible to eradicate this psyllid. Additional surveillance will take place to provide confidence that the associated bacterium is not present in Australia. A transition to management plan is being prepared, to prepare industry (in WA and nationally) to manage this pest, with a focus on limiting the spread of the psyllid and minimising the impact on affected industries.

If you suspect tomato-potato psyllid call the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881**.

Information adapted with acknowledgement from NSW Biosecurity News (March 2017) and <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/tpv> (where you will find more information and photos). Photo reproduced with acknowledgment to Dept. of Agriculture and Food, WA.

Omethoate update

The APVMA has advised that the omethoate reconsideration has been finalised. Details can be found in the Omethoate: Regulatory Decision report (RD) - see <http://apvma.gov.au/node/12661>

The scope of this reconsideration was to assess the toxicological, occupational health and safety, residues and dietary exposure and trade risks associated with the active approvals, product registrations and associated label approvals for omethoate.

The APVMA assessed the available information and concluded that the use of omethoate products according to their previous instructions for use did not meet the safety criteria listed in section 5A of the Agvet Codes for continued registration and approval.

Accordingly the APVMA has varied the instructions for use contained in approved labels of all products containing omethoate. The proposed label variations are detailed in Appendix A of the RD. Those relevant to ornamental plant growers include:

- Retention of the use of omethoate on ornamental plants
- But deletion of all horticultural, pasture, grain legume, cereal and home garden uses, that may result in dietary residues of omethoate on edible crops
- Amendments to the safety directions and first aid instructions for all product labels
- Addition of re-entry intervals to protect workers re-entering treated areas.

The APVMA has now affirmed the active constituent approvals of omethoate, the

registrations of products and the varied label approvals of products containing omethoate.

It's expected that chemical suppliers will start providing product with the new and updated labels as soon as is practicable so as to ensure that existing stocks of product bearing the old labels are cleared from the supply and retail chain before the end of the permitted period of supply (Dec 1 2017). These relevant label particulars will be available via PUBCRIS on the APVMA website in due course.

Events 2017

May 18 Webinar on virus diseases

This will be run as part of the nursery levy funded project, 'Building the resilience and on-farm biosecurity capacity of the Australian production nursery industry (NY15002).' The webinar will be run by Andrew Manners and John Duff (both Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries - DAF), who collectively have over 45 years of experience in pest and disease management. This project is a collaborative project between NGIA, Hort Innovation and DAF (Qld).

Please register for **Virus Identification and Management Webinar** on May 18, 2017 10:00 AM AEST at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7634207580625404161>

Plant viruses can cause serious economic loss, resulting in deformed or unusual growth that may cause it to become unsaleable. Unfortunately, virus symptoms can be very similar to that caused by a variety of other factors including nutrient deficiencies, adverse

environmental and growing conditions, genetic disorders, misapplication of plant growth regulators and herbicides, certain pest infestations and sometimes even infection caused by bacterial or fungal pathogens. As such, viruses are often blamed when the problem is from another factor. This webinar will discuss how to identify virus-like symptoms and steps to confirm if a virus is present. Production nurseries are in a strong position to manage viruses and these strategies will also be discussed, with strong emphasis on virus vectors and other mechanisms of spread.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Brought to you by GoToWebinar® Webinars Made Easy®

June 13-15

International Floriculture Expo, Chicago USA. See <http://www.floriexpo.com/>

August 10-12

Australia New Zealand Biochar Conference (ANZBC17)

Murwillumbah, NSW.

The aims and objectives of ANZBC17 are to bring together scientists & growers to bridge the gap between fundamental science, applied science & commercial applications, to unite the various biochar groups from each State in Australia & New Zealand, to showcase the very latest technology to match the biomass source, value added bio-products, methods of applications and scientific results and commercial trial methods and results.

The conference will address the following themes:

- > Technology & production for matching sustainable biomass sources
- > Value added bio-products
- > Applied science (discoveries & results)
- > Commercial applications (methods & results).

This event is designed for growers, farmers, foresters, policy makers, biochar producers, industry professionals and entrepreneurs. Students and interested citizens will also benefit from this event. See the website for more information:

<https://anzbc.org.au/>

September 3-5

XIII IPA Symposium

Location: Stellenbosch, South Africa.

The Symposium will be held in conjunction with the VII International Conference on Managing Quality in Chains and II International Symposium on Ornamentals. There is a pre-conference tour (1 & 2 September), and a Grower's Day (4 September). For September 5, delegates can register to attend either the International Protea Working Group Symposium or the International Ornamental Symposium.

For more, please visit the ISHS site (<http://ishs2017stellenbosch.co.za>)

Please direct any questions about the pre-conference tour or the grower's day to Karien Bezuidenhout - karien@hortgro.co.za or to Dalichia Taukobong - dalichia@hortgro.co.za

September 16-24

Australian Flowers Week

Incorporating, Australia's first Flower Festival to be held in Brisbane on Friday September 22.

WFA national student floristry competition winners to be announced.

For more information, please contact Shane Holborn – shane@flowersqueensland.asn.au

Next newsletter

The next WFA newsletter will be published in mid June. Highlights of the next issue include n extensive pest and disease management update with details of current minor use permits available to wildflower growers – you'll be pleasantly surprised at the progress we've made! I'll also be covering ongoing progress of RIRDC PRJ-010111 (Minor Chemical Consultant for small and non-levied industries), giving you details of work underway from the 2016 and 2017 funding rounds.

We have adjusted the newsletter schedule as a result of member feedback - from now on, it will be published quarterly as follows:

| Issue | Date of publication |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Winter (June-August) | Mid June |
| Spring (September-November) | Mid September |
| Summer (December-February) | Mid December |
| Autumn (March-May) | Mid March |

The newsletter will be available to current WFA members **only**, again in keeping with member feedback via the survey.

If you are reading the newsletter and are not currently a member of WildFlowers Australia, you will find information on the benefits of membership and an application form on the website at <http://www.wildflowersaustralia.com.au/contact-us/join-wfa-applying-for-membership>

We look forward to welcoming you!

How to contact WFA

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