

Your Levy At Work



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Early adopters, Cameron's Nursery embodies plant health

Trailblazer, Cameron's Nursery, was pioneering sustainability in the early '90s, way before it was 'cool'. These days, the Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS) programs help keep the business at the cutting edge of plant health.

Achieving Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme (NIASA) and BioSecure HACCP accreditation has been pivotal to Cameron's Nursery's success. These credentials ensure the nursery implements the highest standards of practice to safeguard plant health and ensure biosecurity.

By embracing sustainability and pioneering best management practices early on – and also staying ahead of the curve with Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) APPS credentials, Cameron's Nursery maintains the highest possible standards across its site and operations.

Cameron's Nursery, founded by Sonja Cameron and her husband Andy Cameron in 1992, operates on five acres in Arcadia, New South Wales., The nursery supplies retail marketplaces, including big box stores, independent garden centres, in addition to commercial, landscape jobs and pre-grow orders for special events

With a strong commitment to excellence and leadership in the industry, Sonja cites ongoing professional development as a crucial factor in business success.

Sonja received a Hort Innovation-funded scholarship to complete the Masterclass in Horticultural Business at the University of Tasmania and has nearly completed her Master of Business Administration. Unsurprisingly, she has tailored many of her assignments to her industry and business.

Commitment to sustainability practices

Cameron's Nursery has always been a leader in sustainability.

Sonja said the nursery's sustainability journey started back in the late 1990s, before it was fashionable, and in a decade when the business literally ran out of water twice.

"Water is a precious resource and our practices at the time were wasteful. We began researching how drier countries manage water, focusing on recycling and application methods," said Sonja.

"When we moved to our current site in 2000, we built the nursery from scratch. Every decision took sustainability and NIASA standards into account. We focused on recycling, and respect for the local environment and biodiversity.

"Central to our mission has been providing our staff with an annual waste report, so we can address the biggest issues contributing to landfill and find solutions.

"As a result, we've continued to build our sustainability credentials, moving from pot recycling to focusing on propagation trays, working closely with our business partners, suppliers and customers to close the loop on waste."



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FUND

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Photo caption: Salvia Mystic Spires crop

NIASA accreditation

Cameron's Nursery emphasises best management practices which are vital for maintaining high standards in plant production.

A cornerstone of the nursery's approach is maintaining its NIASA accreditation and aligning with the Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS). These programs provide sustainability across the industry.

"Achieving NIASA and EcoHort certification in 2016 highlights our dedication to best practice. The principles this accreditation stands for are now deeply integrated into daily operations," said Sonja.

"By embedding these practices into our routine, they've become second nature, and all our staff are trained accordingly."

Education plays a pivotal role at Cameron's Nursery. Management makes sure new staff grasp the rationale behind their practices. They promote hygiene in the production of high-quality plants.

This approach instills competence and fosters a culture of excellence and accountability throughout the nursery.

"Our commitment to education and rigorous biosecurity measures make sure we undertake meticulous checks that guarantee our customers receive only the highest quality stock," said Sonja.

"The NIASA Audit Management System supports transparency by logging all activities for auditing purposes. This accreditation reassures stakeholders about our standards.

"The audit system not only ensures compliance but also helps us detect any issues early."

Sonja values third-party validation, noting how accreditation keeps Cameron's Nursery updated with industry best practices, and offers external reviews that

can identify areas for improvement that might be missed in daily routines.

"It provides us with perspective – a sector-wide lens and a fresh set of eyes," Sonja said.



Photo caption: Young Rosemary 140mm

BioSecure HACCP certification

Sonja's expertise in plant protection and biosecurity was further strengthened in 2023 when Cameron's Nursery also achieved BioSecure HACCP certification.

BioSecure HACCP is the national nursery industry on-farm plant protection and biosecurity program for production nurseries, growing media manufacturers and greenlife markets.

Implementing BioSecure HACCP tenets has been transformative at Cameron's Nursery, significantly enhancing its already robust biosecurity and integrated pest management (IPM) practices.

"By scouting and identifying issues early, we prevent major problems and effectively manage outbreaks with minimal intervention," said Sonja.

"Releasing beneficial insects in targeted areas allows us to save time, reduce chemical use, and prevent crop losses. This proactive approach not only saves money by

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minimising the need for extensive chemical applications but also helps us avoid significant rework and potential crop losses.”

For nurseries interested in BioSecure HACCP, Sonja advises a step-by-step approach. She recommends contacting Greenlife Industry Australia or talking to a currently certified nursery to get an overview of what is involved.

Continued improvement and industry recognition

Sonja emphasises the importance of continuous improvement and industry recognition.

"Whether it's commercial clients or consumers, everyone expects the highest quality possible. As professionals, it's our responsibility to deliver that quality," said Sonja.

"Certifications lifts the bar on compliance and quality, ensuring we consistently deliver the best plants for gardens and green spaces."

Cameron's Nursery stands as a model for sustainability, best practices and continuous improvement in the horticulture industry. Through dedicated efforts in education, certification, and innovative practices, Sonja and Andy continue to grow and adapt, ensuring exceptional products and sustainable operations for the future.

If you're keen explore NIASA certification and BioSecure HACCP:

- visit nurseryproductionfms.com.au
- contact Greenlife Industry Australia
 - at info@greenlifeindustry.com.au
 - on 1300 95 95 13.

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