

Your Levy At Work



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Dracaena Farm Nursery: From family roots to industry leadership

In Beachmere, Queensland, Dracaena Farm Nursery has evolved from an emerging operation to a leader in Australia's greenlife industry.

Established in 1998 by Bryan and Sharon Hiller, the nursery began with a focus on dracaenas and yaccas, and has since expanded into indoor foliage plants, succulents and orchids.

Now managed by Bryan and Sharon's daughter, Bronwyn Hiller, Dracaena Farm Nursery is setting industry benchmarks with its commitment to excellence, environmental stewardship and innovation. Through third-party accreditations, cutting-edge biosecurity practices and a focus on staff development, the nursery is delivering exceptional plants while adapting to an evolving market.

A foundation of excellence

Dracaena Farm Nursery operates on 3.5 acres, combining shaded growing areas with hail-guard zones for sun-loving succulents. With 10 full-time staff members, the nursery has a strong focus on maintaining high operational standards and delivering plants that exceed customer expectations.

"We are committed to delivering the highest standards in everything we do," Bronwyn said.

"We strive to produce healthy, top-performing plants. For example, we often plant multiple specimens per pot to ensure customers receive lush, thriving plants."

Raising standards with accreditation

The nursery's dedication to excellence was formalised in 2009 when it achieved certification under the Best Management Practice (BMP) program, the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA). To achieve this accreditation, the business refined its practices in sanitation, chemical handling and biosecurity, marking a turning point in their operations.

More recently, accreditations like BioSecure HACCP – a program for implementing and controlling biosecurity risks – have played a critical role in shaping Dracaena Farm's operations. Measures such as raised bench growing, concrete pathways and improved drainage have minimised contamination risks and optimised plant health.

"For us, managing potential fire ant incursions is a big concern, and staying vigilant is key. Beyond that, environmental challenges like bushfires and floods highlight the importance of best practices as a foundation," Bronwyn said.

"Our certifications have encouraged us to evolve our practices, from fine-tuning chemical storage to adopting innovative pest management strategies.

"These steps have strengthened not only our biosecurity but also our ability to deliver consistent, high-quality plants."

Innovative training with mini tech skills

Dracaena Farm is advancing innovation through mini tech skills training, an initiative under the Hort Innovation's levy-funded National Biosecurity and Sustainable Plant Production Program (NY0001). These concise, hands-on sessions equip staff with vital skills in biosecurity and plant care, enabling the nursery to uphold its high standards.

"Mini tech skills training has been invaluable for our team," Bronwyn said.

"These sessions reinforce our methods and ensure we remain focused on delivering healthy, high-health plants."

The team has already completed training in areas such as high health hygiene, imported plant inspection procedure, site surveillance, despatch plant inspection procedure, nursery stock crop monitoring, and introductory modules on the Pest ID Tool and Red Imported Fire Ants.

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“Ongoing training includes topics like measuring acidity and electrical conductivity of growing media and irrigation water, pesticide resistance management, and pest mite identification,” Bronwyn said.

A people-first approach

At its core, Dracaena Farm is a family business, and its success is built on strong relationships. Many staff members have been with the nursery for up to 20 years, creating a close-knit, collaborative environment.

“Our team is the cornerstone of everything we do,” Bronwyn said.

“Investing in their development through training like mini tech skills has been crucial to our operations.”

Bronwyn’s personal connection to the nursery began in childhood, helping her parents during school holidays.

Now, as manager, she carries forward their legacy while adapting to new challenges and opportunities.

Leading the way in sustainability and growth

Dracaena Farm’s commitment to accreditation and training reflects its broader mission to lead the industry in sustainability and quality. By combining best practices with a people-first philosophy, the nursery has built a strong foundation for long-term growth.

“Our focus on quality and continuous improvement has set us apart,” Bronwyn said.

“We are proud to produce healthy, high-performing plants while setting an example for the industry.

“We’d love to reach the 40-year mark and continue evolving. We’re now in second-generation management, and we aim to stay successful and adaptable.”

Access free mini tech skills training

If your business has NIASA, EcoHort or BioSecure HACCP credentials, you can access 22 free mini tech skills courses to enhance staff knowledge and improve operations.

To learn more or explore this training for your nursery, connect with your local Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) Extension Officer.

Contact your local GIA Extension Officer via phone, email, or the via website at info@greenlifeindustry.com.au

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