

NURSERY PAPERS

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Taking our strategy to the next phase – More Trees Please to Improve Your Plant/Life Balance

In 2011 the Australian nursery & garden industry launched its new marketing strategy titled Improve Your Plant/Life Balance. This strategy was designed to meet objectives within the industry's Strategic Plan 2010-2015.

The first phase was launched with the campaign, 'Put a Plant on Your Desk', and was judged an outstanding success. In 2012 the Australian nursery & garden industry takes the strategy to its next level with a campaign called 'More Trees Please', which has been developed in conjunction with an industry consultative panel.

improve
your
**Plant, life
balance™**



This Nursery Paper outlines the objectives of this campaign, its key elements and the range of activities which will be implemented throughout the year. Importantly, this campaign will build upon the work already done to engage with target audiences through established social media networks.

Throughout 2012 and beyond the Australian nursery & garden industry will be taking the message of 'More Trees Please' to key influencers and the community at large, specifically in urban areas.

All the trees and shrubs in urban areas on both public and private land make up our urban forests. This campaign is designed to

increase awareness of the urban forest and its importance to our health and wellbeing.

'More Trees Please' will utilise a range of communication tools from information kits and media releases, to a new look Plant / Life Balance website, blog and existing Facebook and Twitter networks. These communications will be targeted to a variety of stakeholders to get people thinking and talking about 'More Trees Please'.

While key influencers are a priority audience, the issues regarding the importance of trees will be taken to the general public, principally through digital and social media.

Phase I – 'Put a Plant on Your Desk'



Research to measure the impact of the 'Put a Plant on Your Desk' demonstrated the campaign was a resounding success. It reversed negative attitudes toward gardening, educated people on the benefits of plants, encouraged the purchase of plants and created a new generation of plant lovers.

The campaign attracted a younger, more female audience with over 80% of the Facebook community (numbering more than 16,000) being in the 18-35 year demographic.

There was a remarkable change in the attitude towards plants and gardening among those who 'Put a Plant on Their Desks'. There was a 10% decrease in their perception that gardening is hard work and a staggering 22% decrease in agreement with the statement "I don't have time to garden".

More than 70% of people purchased a plant after being involved in the campaign with total retail sales estimated to be more than \$315,000 across more than 29,400 plants. In fact some 67% of people purchased more than one plant and 25% purchased four or more.

Significantly, 94% of people were interested in learning more about plants after getting involved with the campaign, where more than 25,000 plants were given away on March 2, 2011.

Phase 2 - Why 'More Trees Please'

Community, health and wellbeing benefits from the presence of trees in our urban environment are well known but largely ignored. A growing body of research tells us trees are necessary infrastructure - they are just as important and valuable as buildings and roads in our urban environments. An Australian study (Brindal and Stringer, 2009) has shown that \$424.40 per year is the value of the benefits from an average tree in a typical Australian suburban street. These benefits include:

- energy savings from tree canopy shade
- increased property value through aesthetics
- improved air quality
- a positive climate contribution by capturing CO² to generate oxygen.

This one tree will contribute over \$25,000 in gross benefits in its lifecycle.

There are many other ways trees contribute to our health and wellbeing. This campaign will increase awareness of the importance of trees, particularly in our urban environments, where they have 'lost out' to decreasing block sizes, maintenance costs, and nuisance value arguments. Current research and new software tools now enable the positive value of trees to be presented to highlight that we need 'More Trees Please' to improve our Plant / Life Balance.



Image above & below courtesy of Matt Coggan



Our 'key Audiences'

The primary target audience for 'More Trees Please' are the decision makers in our communities:

- garden designers, landscape architects and landscape contractors who select the greenlife for their commissions
- Local government including councillors who vote on policy and staff who draft policy



- Property developers who need to see the value that trees and green space add to their investments
- Arborist's and horticulturalists who support this cause and need our support
- Health organisations who value the importance of trees to our health and wellbeing such as the Cancer Council, Beyond Blue and the Heart Foundation
- Green groups such as Greening Australia, Planet Ark and Landcare

This campaign features a comprehensive information kit for key influencers. Information is being mailed to every council in Australia as well as key decision makers and influencer groups. In addition, the media campaign is taking the message to the various industry magazines representing the key influencer groups, such as *Local Government Manager*, *Residential Developer* and *Landscape Architecture*.

The Australia nursery & garden industry is also inviting other 'green' industries to come on board as it is in everyone's interest to promote more trees in our urban environments.

Improve Your Plant/Life Balance Day

On March 2, 2012, Improve Your Plant/Life Balance Day will be conducted, appropriately, with a tree planting in the national capital, Canberra. The National Arboretum is the location and the planting of a native Silky Oak tree will mark the day to remind Australians of the importance of trees to their health and wellbeing.

Guests representing key influencer groups along with media will get the opportunity to hear about the value that every tree offers to our urban communities.

Throughout 2012 the campaign will support other existing events such as Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show in April, 'Trees for Mum' around Mothers Day in May and National Tree Day in July during which the message of 'More Trees Please' can be highlighted.

An event is also being planned for the start of summer 2012, to highlight the importance of trees in negating the heat island effect in cities where hard surfaces absorb heat and increase temperatures considerably.



i-Tree

NGIA is a Gold Partner in the development of i-Tree - a new software tool that calculates the financial value of the urban forest to a community. i-Tree was originally developed by the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service to aid in urban and community forestry analysis and benefits assessment.

NGIA, Arboriculture Australia, the Cities of Melbourne and Sydney and Enspec Pty Ltd Consultancy are partners in the project to localise the software for Australia.

i-Tree is clearly showing that the economic benefits of trees and our urban forests far outweigh their costs and will provide the tool to validate trees' importance not only to our health and wellbeing but also to our infrastructure and our economy.

In 2012 i-Tree will roll out across Australia, providing councils and all other interested stakeholders with the software that they will be able to use to put a value on their urban forest infrastructure.

COMMUNICATING OUR MESSAGES

Media

There is an emerging body of research about the benefits of trees to our urban communities and this will be utilised in the ongoing media campaign.

The campaign will target all media, both in print and online as well as the broader gardening public to educate everyone in the community about the benefits of 'More Trees Please'.

New Plant/Life Balance Website

The website has been overhauled to provide a fresh look and a range of new features for consumers and our industry.

A regular interactive 'blog' will feature ongoing news about the campaign and the latest research from around the world about the benefits of trees. All events planned for 2012 will be listed here and the site will be linked to the Plant/Life Balance Facebook and Twitter pages. Visit www.plantlifebalance.com.au for more information about this resource.



Facebook & Twitter

The 'Improve Your Plant/Life Balance' Facebook page attracted more than 16,000 fans in 2011 and continues to provide them with news and tips on gardening, and more importantly, the benefits associated with trees and plants in the urban environment. Facebook remains an integral part of the 'More Trees Please' phase of the Improve Your Plant/Life Balance campaign and will feature breaking news on relevant stories and research relating to More Trees Please. The Facebook page can be viewed by visiting <http://www.facebook.com/plantlifebalance>

To complement Facebook a Twitter page has also been developed to provide updates on why we need to improve our plant/life balance. To follow the tweets, visit - @improveyourPLB

QR code

One of the newest information sources is the QR code. Similar to a barcode, it allows smart phone users to link directly with a webpage. The Plant/Life Balance QR code allows connection to the Plant/Life balance webpages at the touch of a button and will be used extensively throughout the campaign



HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

Retailer Industry Kit

An industry kit outlining the campaign is being sent to all retailers in Australia which will include brochures, point-of-sale A4 posters and other background materials. Growers can download all materials from www.ngia.com.au.

The nursery & garden industry encourages the use of both 'More Trees Please' and 'Improve Your Plant/Life Balance' logos on signage, stationery, websites, newsletters and even trucks.

Promotional ideas have been circulated to growers and retailers, such as:

- Have a trees display and highlight their benefits
- Contact your local Cancer Council office and have a joint promotion on the benefit of trees for shade
- Raise money for a local health organisation through a special promotion – trees improve our wellbeing
- Make every day a Plant/Life Balance Day



References

Brindal, M. and Stringer, R., 2009. The value of urban trees: environmental factors and economic efficiency. In: D. Lawry (Editor), TreeNet 2009. TreeNet, Adelaide, pp. 23-36.

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