

WA NURSERY WINS NATIONAL WEEDS HONOUR

The Western Australian garden nursery 'Zanthorrea' has been named Australia's *Most Weed-Wise Nursery* in new Awards announced by the Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS) after nomination for the new National Award by the Weeds Society of Western Australia.

Agriculture and Food Minister (WA) Kim Chance presented the inaugural National Award today to the Zanthorrea Nursery in Maida Vale. Mr Chance said Zanthorrea stood out among nurseries in Australia for its proactive approach to the problem of environmental weeds that presented major threats to native plants, wildlife and environments.



Alec and Jackie Hooper being presented with their award by Kim Chance, Minister for Agriculture and Food Minister (WA)

'This nursery does not sell plants that have the potential to become serious environmental weeds threatening our native plants, wildlife and environments,' Mr Chance said.

Mr Chance said garden escapes were a major environmental problem for Australia. 'It comes down to a combination of good public education and legislation to discourage the use of plants that pose an environmental risk if they escape from gardens. Our communities also depend on garden nurseries showing responsibility about the plants they promote and sell,' Mr Chance said.

'The proprietors of Zanthorrea Nursery, Alec and Jackie Hooper, are well known for their positive attitude towards the environment, showing a great commitment on the issue of invasive alien plants,' the Minister said. 'They have an admirable proactive approach to educating their customers, and building community knowledge about the kind of garden plants that could become environmental weeds'.

'They are forward thinkers - refusing to sell many high-risk invasive garden plant species such as lantana (*Lantana camara*) and arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) for some years, well before they were banned under State legislation,' he said.

'They also don't offer a range of other popular plants such as Morning Glory vines and highly fashionable, but invasive exotic grasses that could escape from gardens to become invasive environmental weeds.'

The CAWS National Award won by Zanthorrea Nursery is open to nurseries throughout Australia and New Zealand.

From: Minister for food and Agriculture WA, Media statment, 3/11/2006

Report from Guy Preston – a referee for Zanthorrea Nursery

[Guy Preston is the National Programme Leader of the Working for Water programme, a ±A\$120 million per annum programme to control invasive alien plants in South Africa. They work very closely with the nursery industry, and have agreed to norms and standards that have seen a massive decline in the breeding or sale of declared invasives in our country.]

I would like to act as a referee for the nomination of the Zanthorrea Nursery in Perth, Western Australia. I visited the Nursery in November 2005, and was most impressed with the commitment of the owners and staff regarding the issue of invasive alien plants. They do not sell plant species that are declared invasives, as might be expected. They also said that they avoid selling plants that are known to be invasive in the area, even if not yet declared as invasives. They are therefore willingly foregoing profit by refusing to stock and sell plants that they know are a problem, unlike unscrupulous nurseries.

One would expect that any nursery being nominated for this award would comply with the above. What I found most impressive when visiting the Nursery was the knowledge of the owner and staff, the promotion of especially plants indigenous to the area, and the level of communication on the issue of invasives for customers. I have little doubt that they will have had a very positive influence on those visiting the Nursery, creating awareness, changing attitudes, and influencing behaviour. One can only admire the ethical standards that are clear in the way the Zanthorrea Nursery approaches its business.

Guy Preston