



Council of Australasian Weed Societies

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MEDIA RELEASE

October 24, 2008

ALBANY NURSERY WINS NATIONAL CAWS AWARD

A small plant nursery in rural Western Australia – the Ardess Nursery in Albany - has been named Australia's most WeedWise Nursery, winning the national prize in this year's annual Council of Australasian Weed Societies Inc. (CAWS) Awards.

Ardess Nursery will be presented with its prize at a special ceremony on Tuesday next week (October 28th) in Albany from ABC 'Gardening Australia' presenter and Patron of Sustainable Gardening Australia Josh Byrne.

The CAWS Award celebrates nurseries that sell only 'environmentally-friendly' plants, unlikely to invade and damage natural areas.

New CAWS President Sandy Lloyd said the CAWS awards helped create more awareness of the massive problems presented for Australia's environment and primary industries from invasive garden plants.

"The CAWS Awards recognise the effort by environmentally responsible retail nurseries that remove invasive garden plants from sale, support appropriate labeling schemes and help educate customers about plants that pose weed threats in Australia," she said.

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The Council of Australasian Weed Societies is an independent body that can express National and regional views on all issues relating to weeds and their management. The Council is composed of delegates from Australian State weed societies and the Plant Protection Society of New Zealand.

Ms Lloyd said the Awards also celebrated nurseries that sold only 'environmentally friendly' plants that were unlikely to invade or damage natural Australian habitats.

"Albany's Ardess Nursery is a highly deserving winner of this year's National Award. This nursery has taken responsibility in its industry, maintaining a proactive approach to the problem of environmental weeds" she said.

"Albany has a national reputation as a beautiful jewel on Western Australia's south coast. Unfortunately, like many areas of Australia, it has a diversity of weeds invading its bushland, coast and farms. Most of these have originated in local gardens. Halting their sale is vital in containing the problem," Ms Lloyd said.

"Since Ardess began business in 2005, its management and staff have worked with local weed managers to determine current and potential invasive garden plants, and they have progressively removed them from sale.

"Staff also readily suggest to customers safe alternatives to plants that could become garden escapees and threaten the local environment. These alternatives include a wide selection of local native plants from the Albany region," Ms Lloyd said.

"CAWS has been particularly impressed with the involvement of Ardess Nursery staff in local environmental community groups and initiatives, including weed removal in local parks and reserves," she said.

"Staff at this nursery has also been instrumental in drafting a local Grow Me Instead brochure with the South Coast Natural Resource Management organisation."

Ms Lloyd said CAWS hoped the publicity about this year's Awards would encourage more retail nurseries around Australia to remove invasive garden plants from sale, support appropriate labeling schemes and educate their customers about the issue.

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The Ardess nursery has been congratulated by the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food.

The Department's Acting Manager of Invasive species, Biosecurity and Research, Jon Dodd said that more than half of the environmental weeds introduced in Australia over the last 25 years had come from garden escapes.

"When garden escapees 'go bush', they impact on native flora and fauna and may also present major problems for our primary industries. Weeds cost Australian agriculture over four billion dollars a year in damage," Dr Dodd said.

"Efforts by responsible nurseries such as Ardess are vitally important to stop the spread of invasive plants, boost public awareness of the problem, and encourage the use of more environmentally friendly plants," Dr Dodd said.

MEDIA CONTACT

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MEDIA INVITE

MEDIA ARE INVITED TO THE CAWS PRESENTATION

1PM - TUESDAY, 28 OCTOBER - ARDESS NURSERY, 230 CHESTER PASS ROAD, ALBANY.

THERE WILL BE INTERVIEW AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES.

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