



# Hydroponic Farmers Federation Newsletter

A0033906W

Volume 4, Issue 04

December 2020



**LATEST NUMBERS**  
Latest data at 6 November 2020

0	0
new cases (last 24 hrs)	lives lost

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# The Secretary



Well what a contrast in a year. This time twelve months ago we had just seen the start of a major bushfire event in Gippsland and we were all looking forward to getting together in large groups. If I had flagged to you all that the world would effectively stop travelling and we would endure a 110 day lockdown

you would have had me certified insane! Covid-19 was certainly something we didn't have on the horizon in 2019 and it has certainly provided plenty of challenges across the past 12 months. But as per usual, the horticultural community has risen to the challenge and worked hard to find ways to keep production and trade going in the most extreme of times. But obviously we are not out of this situation yet. There has been a fair bit of solid advice from both private industry and government, and in this edition of the newsletter we have included some more detail that has been provided to us by Agriculture Victoria. But for

many of us we have had to endure some tough times. On a personal note, running a training business that relied on yours truly travelling interstate has had it's issues! Whilst we have been able to utilise platforms such as 'Zoom' to keep working, a lot of growers have been in survival mode so training has been off the agenda. Tony Spurling of Gateway Hydroponics had a police road block established just outside his property as part of the 'Ring of Steel' control. This effectively saw his passing trade drop to just 30% of normal, and I am sure there are plenty of other examples out there of growers being directly affected by the conditions that were imposed on us all. So the easing of restrictions in the past couple of weeks has certainly been welcome by both industry and public alike. So as the festive season approaches, let's hope that the trend of suppressed Covid-19 cases continues and hopefully we will be able to access a vaccine in 2021 to get some sort of normality back in our lives. So may I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year. I can't wait for the 31st of December so that I can tell 2020 to bugger off! Stay safe everyone, regards **TB**

## HFF Executive Details and Contacts

### President:

John Elford [johnelford@biqpond.com](mailto:johnelford@biqpond.com) 0417 035 956

### Vice President & VFF Representative:

Tony Spurling [info@gatewayestate.com.au](mailto:info@gatewayestate.com.au) (03) 9739 0568

### Secretary & Newsletter:

Tony Bundock [tony@genesis-hort.com.au](mailto:tony@genesis-hort.com.au) 0409 007 610

### Treasurer:

David Pearson [peo@live.com.au](mailto:peo@live.com.au) 0419 966 477

### Membership:

Ian Mortlock [ian@morthydro.com](mailto:ian@morthydro.com) (03) 5461 1111

### Committee Members:

Michael Tran [mtran@eemuir.com.au](mailto:mtran@eemuir.com.au) 0418 899 586

### Honorary advisors:

Gary Edwards [gary.edwards@gardencityplastics.com](mailto:gary.edwards@gardencityplastics.com) 0498 001 926

Simon Monk [simomonk4242@gmail.com](mailto:simomonk4242@gmail.com) 0414 593 706



## The President



Hi everyone, and what a year! 2020 was certainly one that we will never forget for all the wrong reasons. I think if I had asked anyone to describe a 'Pandemic' in January they would have been hard pushed to come up with a definitive answer - fast forward to December and we all know the ins and outs of a Pandemic! From the HFF perspective, the biggest casualty was our conference. In the early stages of Covid as the first wave was subsiding, we really thought we had a good chance to run the event. But as the second wave took over it was evident that we would have to postpone. I really do have to thank a number of people who worked so hard behind the scenes to try and keep the event going. To Ruby and the team at ASN events - thank you. If we had one fall back plan we had twenty and the ASN team have worked tirelessly to respond to changing conditions. And now with the event scheduled for 2022, ASN are still working hard for us. To the trade, I cannot thank you all enough for being so supportive. Almost all of the event supporters have chosen to keep their commitment for sponsorships with us. This is such a great thing, and really secures the future of the HFF 2022 conference. To the committee members, I cannot thank them all enough. All of the members have put in huge amounts of time as we faced ongoing changes and they have all been a tower of strength. And with Covid came changes to another one of our standard events. Our AGM has always been held in conjunction with a grower visit, but with members not being able to travel more than 5kms from home, that wasn't going to happen! So it was time to adopt some new thinking. Our Secretary arranged for a deferment in holding the AGM from the Government, and then it was all aboard the 'Zoom' train for our very first virtual AGM! I have to admit to being very worried about the whole process, and my thanks go to Herman van der Gulik from Enza Zaden who did an amazing job in preparing a running sheet and script for me to work from. Voting was handled by the Secretary using the 'polling' function and details of the AGM are in this newsletter. So as we approach the end of the year I sincerely hope that we will have a much brighter 2021 to look forward to. Without doubt 2020 has been stressful, but in all of this I have been very proud to serve you - the HFF members - as your President. On behalf of the committee, I wish you all a very happy Christmas and here's to a prosperous new year in 2021 - with of course a premiership for the mighty Cats, well let's hope so anyway! Take care everyone and I hope that you have a merry and safe Christmas and I'm looking forward to seeing you all face to face soon! **John**

## Membership

Like many growers, we have had to face the daily challenges with Covid-19 and make some budget adjustments where possible. So it has been pleasing to see that our members have continued to renew their HFF memberships even in these difficult times. We would have usually seen a marked increase in memberships with individuals seeking to gain benefits associated with a conference registration but for obvious reasons that didn't happen. We had anticipated a fall in membership numbers so it has been even more encouraging to see the numbers remaining steady. At the time of going to press we have seen restrictions being lifted in relation to the number of people that can meet together, so we have our fingers crossed that we can get back to regular grower days and events where we can attract new members. And once we get into 2021 we can say that our conference will be happening next year, so don't be frightened to get new members to join! So have a happy and safe Xmas and New Year and here's to a brighter 2021!



**Ian Mortlock—Membership Secretary**

# BASF

**NEW**

## Velifer®

Biological Insecticide



### Outsmart pests with a whole new game plan.

They won't be expecting this. New Velifer® introduces a unique mode of action to your IPM programme based on a naturally occurring fungus that suppresses common insect pests in protected cropping. Safe to beneficial species, and with no withholding period or risk of residues in harvested crops, Velifer® will surprise you too with its cleverness.

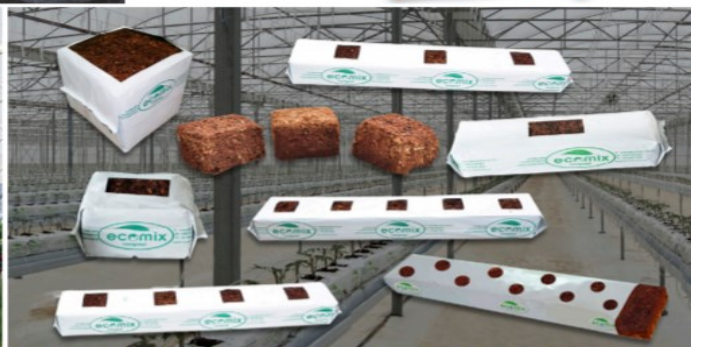
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**royal brinkman**  
global specialist in horticulture

“The team at Brinkman Australia would like to wish you all a safe prosperous festive season and all the best for the coming year.

2020 has been a challenging year, despite the significant global situation our industry continued to grow and develop, as always we are proud of our association and are sure you have all worked super hard and achieved many good things - may the good things and opportunity`s continue in 2021 and beyond.”

**David S. Matt and David**



## Flavorite wins sustainability award

### Flavorite



Winners of the  
EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY  
Award

Last year’s winner of the Gippsland Agribusiness of the Year is back on the winners list again, claiming the Excellence in Sustainability award, a category supported by Bass Coast Shire Council. Located in Warragul, Flavorite have implemented a range of sustainable practices that places them at the forefront of glasshouse farming, not only in Gippsland and Australia, but globally. The Millis and Nichol families have built and developed the operations from decades of experience and through international travel to collaborate with growers and specialists around the world. Chief Operating Officer, Chris Millis is delighted to have won the award. “Sustainability is at the core of everything we do – and we are constantly evolving our practices,

growing mediums and packaging to minimise our environmental footprint and maximise the quality of what we produce – it’s really satisfying to have that recognised in what was a very competitive field of finalists for this award “. Their impressive 420,000 square metres of glasshouse (*continued pg 6*)

## Flavorite wins sustainability award

(continued) technology enables them to control the growing environment of all their crops, focusing on water conservation, controlling the temperatures, irrigation, pest management and growing cycles. From their humble beginnings with 3,000 square metres of plastic igloo greenhouses to grow tomatoes in the late 1980's, fast forward to 2020 where production has expanded to include new products such as capsicums, cucumbers and blueberries, with the blueberries being the only crop that is not grown in the glasshouses. In the past 12 months Flavorite have consolidated their three businesses into one and have their next stage of growth mapped out. This includes building a new glasshouse that will cover around 4 hectares for



**Chris Millis (COO, Flavorite group) and  
Mike Nichol (CEO, Flavorite Group)**

their cucumber production. This new addition will take them to maximum capacity for land use on their Gippsland property, located on the farming fringe of Warragul, just over 100 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. Glasshouse horticulture production yields 60% more produce over traditional field farming by providing a protected and controlled environment for plants. Flavorite use significantly less chemicals through a very controlled Integrated Pest Management system where crops are scanned by staff, pests are monitored and counted, and beneficial bugs introduced in appropriate numbers. They also use mass trapping for flying insects and have a thorough cleaning process in place for weed removal. Their approach to water conservation is impressive, with almost 90% of water used on the farm collected from building run off and stored in dams. They have also installed UV technology to sterilise run off water and fertilisers that would otherwise have been lost during the irrigation process. Glasshouse production only requires 20% of the water field growers use to produce 1kg of tomatoes. Water usage is computer controlled ensuring each plant receives the exact amount of water to the millilitre. The combination of a number of things create a consistently stable growing environment, including ; - The use of diffused glass increases light transmission by scattering the light that enters the glasshouse, increasing photosynthetic activity, resulting in greater production. The glasshouses are heated using natural gas, which creates a CO<sup>2</sup> by-product that is captured and pumped back into the glasshouse to enhance plant and fruit growth. - Rockwool, made from molten rock spun into cotton candy like fibres and then compressed into cubes, provides an optimal growing medium, with greater stability for the plants' roots. The use of glasshouses means Flavorite essentially use the same land space year on year and don't have to rest land. Flavorite are also undertaking several significant sustainability projects including replacing plastic packaging with cardboard. They are currently working with major retailers to convert as much packaging over to cardboard. Cost is an issue but Flavorite are working with their customers to find a viable solution. 90% of waste from their huge growing operation is plant matter, but this is currently contaminated with string and plastic clips used during the growing phase of the plants. They are looking at trials to replace the string and plastic with biodegradable materials enabling them to use the waste and convert to fertiliser. As one of Australia's largest glasshouse producers of fresh fruit and vegetables, this business has a rich history that began with tomatoes and has grown to so much more, produced across a footprint the size of 58 football fields. Complimenting their passion for producing a quality product, is their commitment to continually seeking new ways to reduce the impact on the environment and continue to increase the shelf life of all the produce they grow and sell – which ultimately helps contribute to the fight against food waste.

# COVID-19 Business Continuity Guidelines Updated

**Integrated** Emergency  
Management  
and **Recovery**




In our last newsletter we bought you some innovative and free guidelines for working through a number of issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. These were kindly provided by the team at Nuffield Group. Following on from this, Nuffield Group have continued to develop resources that they are willing to once again share on a free basis. The resources are highlighted below and can be found at the web site of <https://www.nuffieldgroup.com/iemr/>

Our thanks once again to Jayston Small and Laura Sullivan of Nuffield, and Craig Lapsley for making these documents available to the Hydroponic Farmers Federation on a pro bono basis.

DOWNLOAD  
COVID-19  
BUSINESS  
CONTINUITY

DOWNLOAD  
COVID-19 SAFE  
PLAN  
(MICRO, SMALL &  
MEDIUM BUSINESS)

DOWNLOAD  
COVID-19  
BUSINESS RE-  
OPENING PLAN

DOWNLOAD  
LIFELINE AUSTRALIA WORKPLACE  
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE FOR  
MANAGERS

DOWNLOAD  
MENTAL HEALTH RISK PLAN  
FOR BUSINESS



Jayston Small



Laura Sullivan



Craig Lapsley

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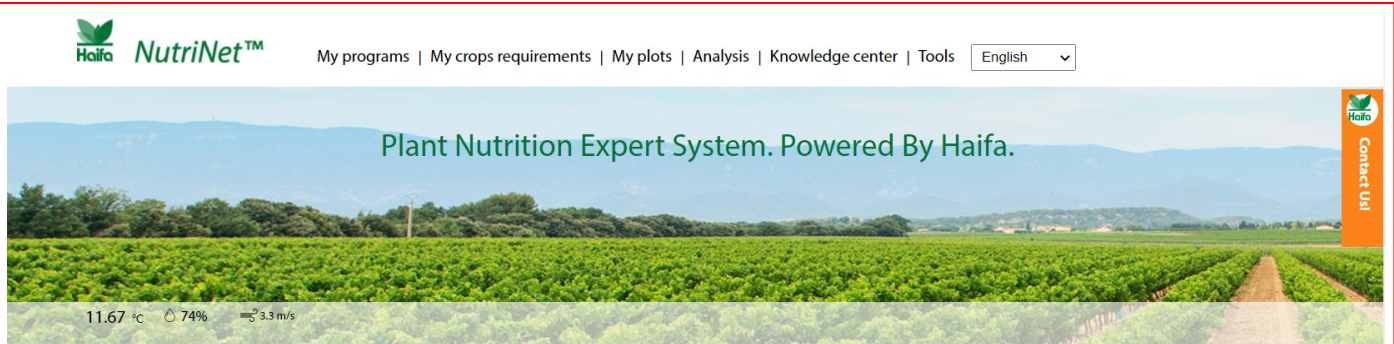
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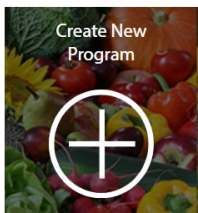
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# NutriNet—Haifa



## My Latest Programs



Fertiliser company Haifa have recently introduced an online tool for managing fertiliser applications in hydroponic systems. Haifa NutriNet™ is a powerful tool made to help growers to plan irrigation schemes and nutrification (fertigation) programs, with consideration of the actual growth conditions. NutriNet™ takes you to the next level of plant nutrition with the most sophisticated expert system platform. The software is operated over the web exclusively. Haifa Group is globally known for its core value of Knowledge Sharing. Growers from all over the world use its detailed guides and fertilization programs to get the most of their crops. Haifa NutriNet™ uses a comprehensive databases of crop nutrition requirements, that meets almost any growth environment. Through a sequence of steps, the user retrieves or enters information, which is integrated by the software to a detailed, optimized Nutrification program. Haifa NutriNet™ offers users:-

- Rich and updated localized database of crop requirements
- Responsive to differences in soil and water composition
- A generated step-by-step Nutrification™ program
- Program can be edited to reflect farmer’s preference
- Cloud based system with programs management capabilities
- The service is Free of Charge



Access to the system can be made through the web link <https://nutrinet.haifa-group.com/Home> and by following the “Sign Up” link. To support new users, Haifa has also produced a useful tutorial video to help get you started. This can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcx3fzN28bY>

Nutrient Requirement

ppm    mmol/l    meq/l    Elemental    Oxide

Growth stage	Days	Macronutrients						Secondary Nutrients				Micronutrients						Ec	
		N_Total	N_NH4	N_NO3	N_NH2	P2O5	K2O	CaO	MgO	SO4	Cl	Fe	Mn	Zn	Cu	Mo	B	ds/m	meq/l
Planting - Flowering	20	100.000	20.000	80.000	0.000	90.000	150.000	110.000	45.000	110.000	0.000	1.000	0.497	0.200	0.200	0.033	0.025	1.08	
flowering to fruit set	40	130.000	26.000	104.000	0.000	90.000	230.000	150.000	65.000	150.000	0.000	1.000	0.497	0.200	0.200	0.033	0.025	1.53	
Fruit Fill - Ripening	30	160.000	32.000	128.000	0.000	90.000	295.000	180.000	80.000	180.000	0.000	1.000	0.497	0.200	0.200	0.033	0.025	1.89	
Ripening and harvest	90	130.000	26.000	104.000	0.000	90.000	265.000	150.000	75.000	150.000	0.000	1.000	0.497	0.200	0.200	0.033	0.025	1.66	



## Serpentine Leafminer detected in NSW



The Serpentine leafminer (SLM; aka pea leafminer; *Liriomyza huidobrensis*) was found infesting field-grown vegetables in western Sydney in late October 2020 with impact assessments underway. NSW Dept Primary Industries and Greater Sydney Local Land Services are conducting surveillance to determine the extent of the incursion. Hort Innovation Biosecurity Research and Development Manager Dr Greg Chandler said, “Serpentine leafminer is listed as number 20 on the list of Australia’s top 40 high priority plant pests. Leafminers are listed as one entry and there are five species in that category, including the serpentine leafminer.” Hort Innovation’s research, development and extension program for control, eradication and preparedness for vegetable leafminer has been established to bolster preparedness for and protection against the potential spread of vegetable leafminer (*Liriomyza sativae*), American serpentine leafminer (*Liriomyza trifolii*) and serpentine leafminer (*Liriomyza huidobrensis*) through Australian growing regions. The program is a partnership with Cesar Australia, University of Melbourne, Plant Health Australia, Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy in the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and Ausveg. The project activities include developing information and resources for monitoring, managing and eradicating leafminers. An informational video outlining the leafminer, its arrival in Australia – the impact they can have, and the multi-industry approach to manage them, and what to do if you detect them. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-gRuC9TaO0> Easy to read documents including general surveillance plans, regional response plans, videos, and general information can be



found on the AUSVEG website at <https://ausveg.com.au/biosecurity-agrichemical/biosecurity/mt16004/> Dr Greg Chandler said, “Leafminer eggs are laid inside leaf tissue and the larvae eat the inside of the leaf, leaving behind leaf trails. This reduces photosynthetic capacity in the plants and in severe cases causes total yield loss in crops. Like many serious agricultural pests, the serpentine leafminer has developed insecticide resistance overseas and would do the same in Australia, making it even more difficult to control.” The Serpentine leafminer has several hundred reported hosts from nearly 50 plant families. Some of which include: Brassicaceae (cabbage family), Cucurbitaceae (melon or gourd family), Solanaceae (tomato, potato, chili, and others), Asteraceae (sunflower family including lettuce, chrysanthemum, and sunflowers), Onions and Weeds

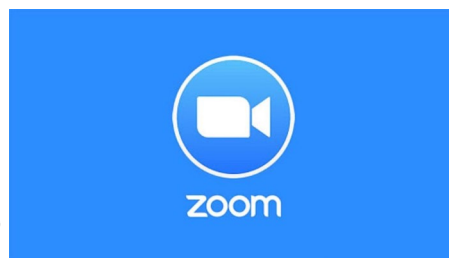
### What to do if you identify a leafminer?

All growers are encouraged to report any signs of leaf mining in vegetables directly to the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.**

Photos of damage and leafminers can be sent to [biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## The 'Virtual' HFF AGM

With all the restrictions surrounding us with Covid-19, the deemed 'normal' Hydroponic Farmers Federation AGM which has been traditionally held in March/April as part of a farm visit, was off the cards. At one stage we thought we would be able to hold the event and then the second Covid-19 wave hit, so that was the end of that. However, with the pressure on for the HFF to fulfil its legal obligation to hold an Annual General Meeting, it was decided to utilise the virtual



video conferencing platform of 'Zoom' to enable the event to proceed. So on Wednesday the 28th of October, the HFF's AGM went ahead thanks to the wonders of modern technology. As many of you have found, having a meeting 'online' has become the new way to communicate, and this was a concept that the committee and members easily grasped, and made a success.

There was a total of 13 members attending which while not a massive crowd was a quorum which meant the event could legally proceed. As with any meeting there was a need to vote to accept previous minutes and vote on items, and this was effected through the use of the Zoom polling option which meant the attendees could vote confidentially and also view the final voting figures.

One of the major agenda items were the proposed changes to the organisational constitution. The constitutional change to the Rules of the Federation was outlined by John and the proposal was made to adapt rule 20,3,b and 20.4. The current Committee proposed to change the Rules of the Federation (the constitution) by adapting Rule 20 and 22 to ensure consistency and relevance. The committee had discussed the resolution and recommended its adoption. The constitutional change required a special resolution and over 21 days notice to all members to change the Rules of the HFF Inc. (Rule 12,2) which was carried out.

The changes to Rule 20,3,b and 20,4, allowed for changing the size of the committee by two ordinary members, to 4 ordinary members. The committee retains 4 Officers in the committee, and the total number of committee members would change from 6, to a total of 8. The proposed changes also proposed to increase the ratio of the number of industry members to grower / supporter committee members from 1 industry member per 2 grower members, to a maximum 50% industry members.

The basic reasoning for the changes were that the committee reported that they had been very successful with the additional support of the two consultants to the committee, there was a need for industry support and voice to be most relevant to growers, to diversify the knowledge, experience, interests and ideas of the committee, and to create stability and spread the workload to have a successful organisation. The change to Rule 22,2, removed reference to the procedure in 2000 used to start the forced committee retirements. This is now redundant and is covered in Rule 22,1 with forced retirement 2 terms / AGM's after election. Discussion was invited and following this the motion was carried. The general consensus of the meeting was that having a greater trade involvement was a benefit to the organisation as a whole.

President John Elford commented, 'I was very wary of the whole concept at first as I had a huge fear that the technology would fail at the last minute, but thanks to Shona at ASN and the rest of the committee, the whole event ran faultlessly.'

Long time friend of the HFF, Herman van der Gulik, joined the meeting from New Zealand and took over the role of chair while the elections were held. Herman also had a major input into the event by developing a running script to ensure the meeting went smoothly.

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**WESTERN SYDNEY  
UNIVERSITY**

A photograph of a woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a white lab coat, standing in a greenhouse. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle smile. The background shows green plants and the structure of the greenhouse.

# **BE A SECTOR LEADER IN PROTECTED CROPPING**

# GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PROTECTED CROPPING GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PROTECTED CROPPING

**The Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate in Protected Cropping will educate future leaders for the Australian horticultural sector via an innovative and flexible industry-supported training model.**

Be part of the fastest growing food producing sector in Australia and join the only protected cropping course delivered at a postgraduate level in Australia. Western Sydney University offers a unique Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate course in Protected Cropping providing exciting learning opportunities. Extend your knowledge and further develop your expertise in the areas of science, technology and business with a strong focus on high-tech and intensive horticulture.

This course is designed to comprehensively cover both Australian and international challenges in sustainable greenhouse production in a changing global climate. Students will learn how protected cropping utilises cutting-edge technologies in the core areas of crop production, plant physiology, biotechnology, pest management, postharvest, climate control systems, integrated data intelligence, and business management and logistics. Additionally, students will learn best-practices from the protected cropping industry experts to equip graduates for employability and mobility.

The Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate courses in Protected Cropping are funded by the Hort Frontiers Leadership Fund, part of the Hort Frontiers strategic partnership initiative developed by Hort Innovation, with co-investment from Western Sydney University, key industry partners (Flavorite, Costa Group, Perfection Fresh, Australian Fresh Leaf Herbs, and Greenworks) and contributions from the Australian government.

The industry partners will host students for their industry research projects. Therefore, engaged students will be job-ready to start in the protected cropping industry following completion of the course.

## ACCREDITATION

Both the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma in Protected Cropping are recognised by the two industry organisations – Protected Cropping Australia and the Hydroponic Farmers Federation.

## WHAT YOU'LL STUDY

The course includes a combination of flexible online learning modules and practical on-site workshops to allow you the flexibility to work while studying.

The highlight for your learning journey is the Masterclass experience, where you will meet with industry experts and work on real life industry challenges in a world-class, high-tech greenhouse facility. Themes within the workshops for the Masterclass include software and hardware systems, crop and produce management, integrated pest management and fertigation systems.

## PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

The Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate in Protected Cropping courses are a key education and training component of National Vegetable Protected Cropping Centre, jointly funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia and Western Sydney University. The Centre encompasses 1800sq. m. over 9 independently controlled growing spaces designed with the world's very best glasshouse infrastructure and sensor controlled systems, to offer research, education and training opportunities in modern protected cropping horticulture.

The practical experience gained during this course will allow you to be part of the sustainable solution that focuses on resource management, reducing agricultural pollutants and environmental footprint, and using technology to advance production.

Graduates of this degree can look forward to career opportunities, such as; Horticultural Business Managers, Crop and Nursery Managers, Business Consultants or High-tech Growers.

## HOW TO APPLY

Postgraduate course applications are processed online and can be made directly to Western Sydney University at [westernsydney.uac.edu.au/ws](https://westernsydney.uac.edu.au/ws) or alternatively through the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) at [uac.edu.au/postgraduate](https://uac.edu.au/postgraduate).

Students are eligible to apply for one of the 65 **scholarships** (up to \$5,000 each) and **internships** (up to \$17,500 each) generously provided by the five industry partners. The applicants need to submit an Expression of Interest form and the Project Reference Group will make the selection.

For more information about studying this course, please contact

**Professor Zhonghua Chen**

**0466 544 696**

**[z.chen@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:z.chen@westernsydney.edu.au)**

Visit our Protected Cropping course pages for more information.

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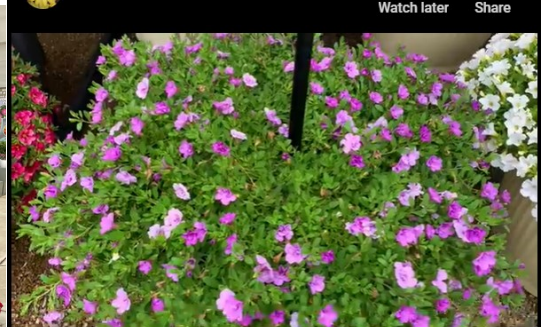
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# Ball Australia 'Hybrid' Grower Trials

With Covid-19 restrictions seeing many industry field trials being run in the 'virtual' space, Ball Australia recently held their annual grower trials in both a live and virtual forum. The trials were held between the 1st and the 4th of December and showcased a wide range of Ball's stock from both vegetative and seed propagation. Growers who wanted to attend the 'live' event were required to pre register to ensure that onsite numbers did not exceed the permitted maximum as stipulated by Victorian Government guidelines. Once on site a check in process with a QR code app meant that all visitors were identified and could be traced if required. Growers wishing to attend the 'Virtual' event were able to access a plan of the grower trial site and view video's of each area, as well as a list of the various varieties on display. These small videos gave a great view of the various plant type and varieties. According to Ball's Managing Director - Paul Boland, Ball Australia have been fortunate to be able to operate during the tough times associated with the global pandemic, and the surge in demand for plants and gardening in general across the lockdown period has driven a strong market for plants in general. As in previous years, the Ball Grower trials showcased some truly magnificent examples of potted colour and foliage plants, leaving both the physical and virtual visitor with a wide range of choice for future growing projects. The virtual tour is available by logging onto the Ball Australia website which can be found at <https://ballaustralia.com>



# Flower Industry Australia

Flower Industry Australia (FIA) , a newly formed nationally represented peak body for flower growers and florists, was officially launched on the 13th of October.

With the mantra of “unite, protect, and connect” it aims to provide national advocacy for macro and micro flower growers and florists on a number of industry issues such as Biosecurity and Country of Origin Labelling, as well as promoting nationwide industry connections, access to industry specific industrial relations, events and promotions. FIA has grown from the vision of a small group of passionate flower industry professionals, who recognised that the Australian flower industry urgently needed to form a more unified approach to flourish.

The CEO of FIA and the inaugural Board of Directors consists of 10 men and women with working backgrounds in floriculture (at both micro and macro scales), floristry, floral education, biosecurity, and law, allowing representation and advocacy at all levels across Australia.

Although still in its infancy, FIA has already lobbied with the government on important issues currently affecting the industry, including biosecurity matters relating to cut flower imports and country of origin labelling.

Memberships opened mid-September to all growers and florists across the country offering access to industrial relations support, online directory listing, Australian Flower Magazine, advocacy to government and many other benefits. Whether a micro farmer, a glasshouse grower, a ‘bricks and mortar’ florist, a large events florist or even a student entering the flower industry— FIA will advocate for all on the issues that affect them in the industry.

FIA Board Member, Lawyer and NSW Farmers Board Member Sal Russo welcomed the national launch adding “stronger biosecurity is required to secure our future – more needs to be done and a national approach with FIA is pivotal “

All monies earned and raised through FIA will be spent within the Australian flower industry for the benefit of FIA members.

For more information about flower Industry Australia and their memberships, please view the website at [www.flowerindustryaustralia.com.au](http://www.flowerindustryaustralia.com.au)



# Covid Assistance

## Agriculture sector support – coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic



The Victorian Government is committed to supporting agriculture / horticulture, food processing and critical supply chain businesses during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. As part of this process the government is assisting growers to adapt and be COVID-safe, with support available to help worker relocation, induction and training, business adaptation, sourcing seasonal workers and more.

The tables below and in the following pages will give you a snapshot of the various support programs and who the best contacts are to further these initiatives.

Further information about available support can also be obtained by visiting the Agriculture Australia website at:- <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-covid-19>

SUPPORT	DESCRIPTION	CONTACTS
<b>Agriculture Workforce Plan</b>		
<b>Business adaptation grants</b>	Grants between \$10,000 and \$300,000 will support eligible businesses to meet the costs of adapting workplaces to comply with health, safety and social distancing requirements or adapting to required business changes as a result of the pandemic.	Register via the Agriculture Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Worker relocation and accommodation</b>	A daily travel-to-work allowance of up to \$50 per employee and daily accommodation support of up to \$200 per employee is available to businesses unable to fill eligible roles locally.	Register via the Agriculture Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Worker induction and retraining</b>	Grants between \$1000 and \$100,000 are available to support eligible employers inducting workers into new job roles and/or delivering re-training.	Register via the Agriculture Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Seasonal workforce support</b>		
<b>Seasonal Workforce Coordinators</b>	Coordinators are providing support for seasonal workforce needs in key regions experiencing seasonal workforce pressures.	<b>Sunraysia:</b> <a href="#">Sue McConnell</a> , Agriculture Victoria, 0418 572 087 <b>Goulburn Murray:</b> <a href="#">Aimee McCutcheon</a> , Agriculture Victoria, 0407 545 966 <b>Other regions:</b> <a href="#">Sze Flett</a> , Agriculture Victoria, 0419 573 886
<b>CALD Engagement Officers</b>	Engagement Officers are helping link culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities with local industry, employers, labour hire agencies, local government and other stakeholders.	<a href="#">Del Delpitiya</a> , Agriculture Victoria, 0436 649 860
<b>Seasonal Workforce Accommodation Program</b>	This program team is working with local government, industry, accommodation providers and regional stakeholders to ensure suitable accommodation supply is available for seasonal workforce. Funding is available to address immediate seasonal workforce accommodation and transportation issues.	More information will be available on the Agriculture Victoria <a href="#">website</a> shortly. Contact: Myles Gaffney, Agriculture Victoria, 0407 335 602
<b>Connecting job seekers and employers</b>		
<b>Working for Victoria</b>	The Working for Victoria platform is a free service that matches businesses with new employees, with more than 70,000 Victorian jobseekers registered on the platform. Agricultural seasonal workforce employers, labour hire agencies and those looking for agricultural work are encouraged to register their interest through the platform.	Register via the Working for Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .



# Covid Assistance

<b>Skills and Job Centres</b>	The Victorian Government's Skills and Jobs Centres support employers to meet their workforce needs, along with assisting people who want to enter the workforce, start training or re-skill.	More information can be found on the Department of Education and Training <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Harvest Trail</b>	The Australian Government's Harvest Trail Service connects workers with seasonal jobs in rural and remote locations.	More information can be found on the Harvest Trail <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Additional Victorian and Commonwealth support</b>		
<b>Creating a COVIDSafe workplace</b>	Information and resources to help business owners and operators understand their obligations and prepare COVIDSafe Plans, including guidance, a template and workplace attendance register.	More information can be found at <a href="https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au">coronavirus.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>OHS Essentials program</b>	WorkSafe Victoria is offering free workplace safety consultation service – including advice on COVIDSafe plans and practices – delivered by independent occupational health and safety (OHS) experts.	More information can be found on the WorkSafe Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Temporary relief for financially distressed businesses</b>	The Commonwealth Government is temporarily increasing the threshold at which creditors can issue a statutory demand on a company. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will tailor solutions for owners or directors of businesses that are currently struggling due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.	More information can be found on the ATO <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Boosting cash flow for employers</b>	Up to \$100,000 will be available for eligible small and medium sized businesses and not-for-profits that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000.	More information can be found on the Business Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment</b>	A \$1500 lump sum payment supports workers who can't earn an income because they must self-isolate or quarantine at home, or are caring for someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).	More information can be found on the Services Australia <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Test Isolation Payment</b>	A \$450 payment that provides financial support for Victoria workers required to self-isolate to wait for the results of a coronavirus (COVID-19) test.	Visit the Department of Health and Human Services <a href="#">website</a>
<b>Wellbeing and mental health support for small businesses</b>	Victorians dealing with the challenges of running a small business can access mental health support to navigate through the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19). Current support includes St John Ambulance Mental Health and Crisis Support Training.	More information can be found on the Business Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Supporting apprentices and trainees</b>	Eligible employers can apply for a wage subsidy of 50 per cent of the apprentice's or trainee's wage from 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2021.	More information can be found on the Business Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Extension to JobKeeper</b>	JobKeeper has been extended to March 2021. Support will be targeted to businesses and not-for-profits that continue to be significantly impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19).	More information can be found on the Australian Taxation Office <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Business Support Fund</b>	Meat and seafood processing, and supermarket and food distribution are among the sectors that may be eligible to access grants through the Business Support Fund. Round three offers \$10,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000, depending on the business' annual payroll, to support businesses to make it through restricted trading.	Call <a href="#">Business Victoria</a> on 13 22 15 or complete a <a href="#">contact form</a> .
<b>Victorian Export Recovery Package</b>	The \$15.7 million export recovery package will address logistics and supply chain issues caused by the pandemic and establish new export channels.	Register your interest via the Global Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Payroll Tax Relief</b>	Businesses with annual taxable wages up to \$3 million will have their payroll tax for the 2019-20 financial year waived.	More information can be found on the State Revenue Office Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .

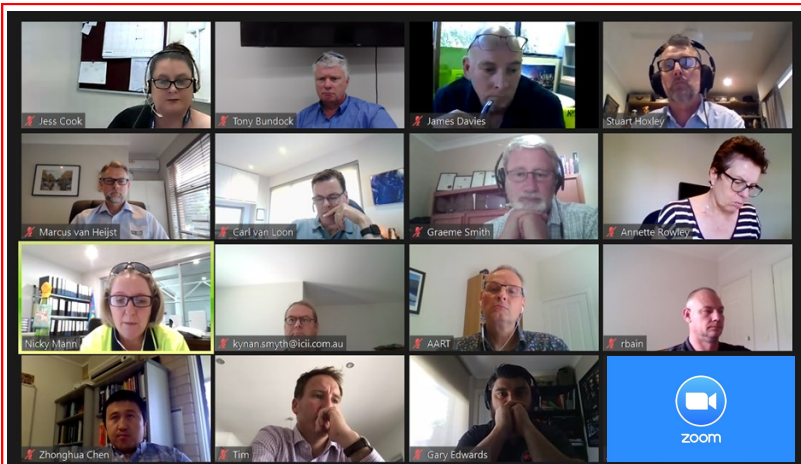
Agriculture sector support –  
coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

## Covid Assistance

Useful resources		
<b>Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)</b>	Essential information about coronavirus (COVID-19), symptoms, testing, physical distancing and Victoria's restriction levels.	More information can be found on the DHHS <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Victorian Skills Gateway</b>	Victorian TAFEs and registered training organisations are offering free, short, accredited training courses (Skill Sets) to upskill workers to administer and implement infection control policies and procedures within workplaces.	More information can be found on the Victorian Skills Gateway <a href="#">website</a> or through your local TAFE or registered training organisation.
<b>Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA)</b>	Tools, information and free services for businesses to keep functioning with minimal disruption through technology.	More information can be found on the Australian Business Continuity <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Australian Taxation Office (ATO)</b>	Up-to-date information and advice to business.	More information can be found on the ATO <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Business Victoria</b>	Find tips on how to create a <a href="#">continuity plan</a> , <a href="#">evaluate risk</a> and <a href="#">prepare a risk management plan</a> . Learn how to <a href="#">respond and recover</a> . Book a low-cost <a href="#">appointment with a mentor</a> to help you work through or develop a recovery plan.	More information can be found on the Business Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>WorkSafe Victoria</b>	Find the latest information about coronavirus (COVID-19), and support for employers and employees to prevent workplace exposure. Also industry specific and multi-lingual information.	More information can be found on the WorkSafe Victoria <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</b>	Free annual membership and access to coronavirus (COVID-19) business resources.	Register via the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Export Finance Australia</b>	Support and resources for exporters during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.	More information can be found on the Export Finance <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>Export Council of Australia</b>	Updates on supply chains and freight and a suite of tools and resources for exporters.	More information can be found on the Export Council of Australia <a href="#">website</a> .

## Chisholm 'Round Table' Meeting



In a concerted effort to reinvigorate horticultural training activity within their excellent greenhouse training facility, Chisholm Institute of TAFE recently invited a number of key industry stakeholders to a 'Round Table' meeting to explore training and facility options. The meeting was held via the 'Covid safe' platform of Zoom, and was hosted by Chisholm's Manager of Hospitality, Environment and Regional Education, Jessica Cook, with assistance from Chisholm staff members Stuart Hoxley

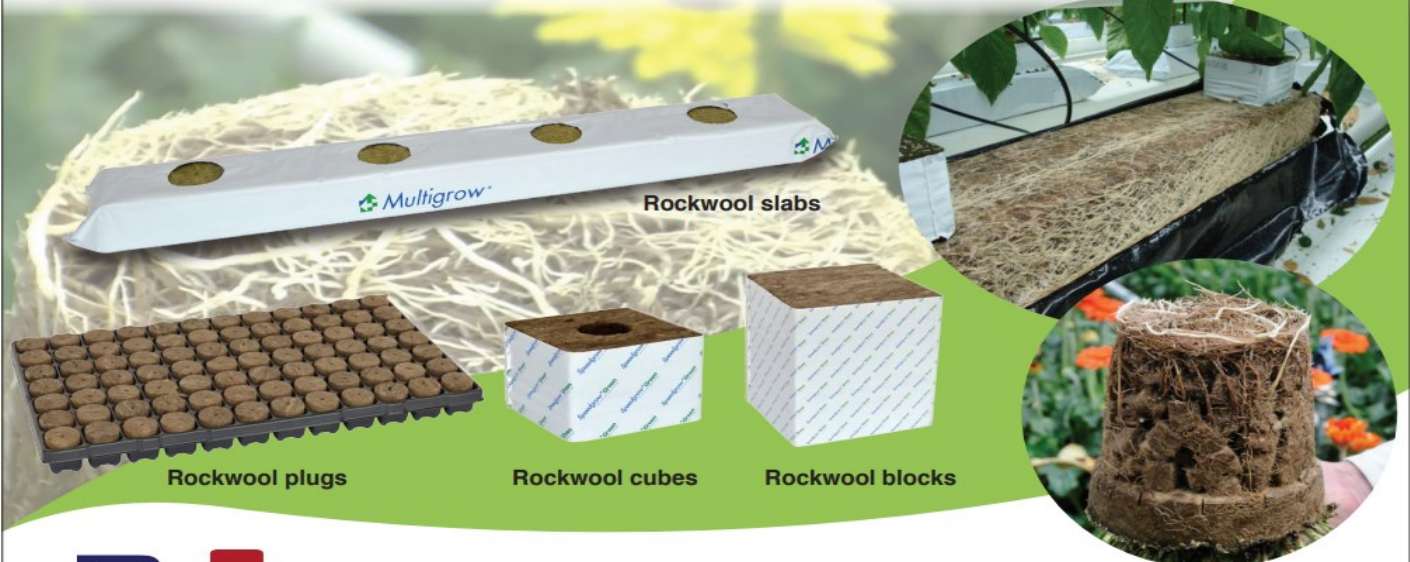
and James Davies. The industry side was effectively a 'who's who' of the protected cropping industry with private industry and peak body organisations Protected Cropping Australia and the Hydroponic Farmers Federation well represented. Lasting two hours, the meeting allowed Chisholm to gain a good industry perspective on training needs, and highlighted Chisholm's commitment to providing quality training for the industry going forward. The meeting was the start to a process of industry consultation and participants were keen to commit to continuing to support and develop Chisholm. If you would like to participate in further discussion then please feel free to contact Jessica Cook at:- [jessica.cook@chisholm.edu.au](mailto:jessica.cook@chisholm.edu.au)

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## HFF Committee Planning Event



After spending the past 8 months meeting on virtual platforms such as 'Zoom', the HFF Committee were finally able to catch up for a face to face meeting on Monday the 30th of November. The team gathered at the Atura Hotel in Dandenong to cover off a number of administration issues, and to plan events and grower days for 2021. 'Having a face to face to face meeting is always great value with the committee, and they never fail to surprise me with their enthusiasm and ideas' said President John Elford. 'As a team we all work exceptionally well together, plus we always have a good laugh which isn't a bad thing given the issues we have all been through!'

The planning day also included a brain storming session around the 2022 conference which with all things being equal, will be held at the Atura in the traditional June/July slot. This process has been greatly eased by the ongoing support of the trade who have elected to roll over their sponsorships from this year's postponed event. In relation to the grower days, the committee would love to hear from any members that would either be willing to host an event, or know of an enterprise that might be willing to do the same. The event concluded with a dinner, and apparently the President advised everyone to take the solid advice of the Victorian Premier and 'Get on the beers' which was dutifully adhered to by the majority.....

# Rijk Zwaan

## Supporting sustainable cucumber production with blueleaf® varieties

Blueleaf® is a trait that distinguishes some of Rijk Zwaan's cucumber varieties and assists growers in maintaining stronger, healthier, more productive crops. With increased photosynthetic activity, blueleaf® extends cultivation time by allowing plants to make better use of available light. Varieties with this trait appear healthier due to the dark blue/green colouring of the leaves, resulting from improved chlorophyll levels in the plant. While it is not a form of resistance, crops benefit significantly from the inclusion of this trait. Rijk Zwaan blueleaf® varieties enjoy the advantage of increased absorption of light and nutrients. This results in a longer, healthier and more productive crop. Plants are more balanced and operate with more effective nutrient distribution. They are also less susceptible to disease infection and pests, which allows growers to enjoy less reliance on chemical spraying, due to naturally occurring strengths within the plant. This also enables Rijk Zwaan to support growers seeking more sustainable cucumber production with stronger crops, more adaptable to environmental changes.



*Rijk Zwaan Blueleaf Cucumber Variety*

Rijk Zwaan's varieties are well adapted to Australia's tough climate and with a blueleaf® variety for every season, you can be assured to find the right fit for your needs with productive plants all year round. **Craig RZ** is Rijk Zwaan's market leader in Lebanese cucumbers and is an excellent variety for the spring, summer and autumn production cycles. It is a multi-fruited variety with blueleaf® characteristics enabling crops to be healthier and more productive over an extended period. This variety is a strong open plant, displaying a good balance between plant growth and fruit production. Featuring excellent fruit quality and with a very high fruit load and yield potential, Craig RZ also shows a strong setting throughout the length of the plant. The uniform size of the fruit also makes packing easier with Craig RZ. Craig RZ is followed by Lyman RZ for the late summer/autumn production and Morris RZ for the autumn/winter cycle.

In the Continental cucumbers, variety **Tantalos RZ**, one of the first featuring Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic Virus (CGMMV) resistance and blueleaf®, has been the absolute standout for the spring, summer and autumn cycle with its strong, vigorous plants, quality fruit and a long production window.



*Rijk Zwaan Tantalos Cucumber Variety*

Rijk Zwaan is pleased to be introducing Insula RZ and Maritimo RZ, two additional blueleaf® varieties in 2021 with broad harvesting windows, also with the added-value of CGMMV resistance. Insula RZ is a versatile and robust variety with high yields of long and heavy fruit, whereas Maritimo RZ is a more generative crop for all year round especially in milder conditions.

Rijk Zwaan's blueleaf® varieties give growers more certainty of stronger, healthier plants and a successful crop. Growers are encouraged to discuss safeguarding their next crop with a complete blueleaf® program from Rijk Zwaan. For more information contact Rijk Zwaan Australia at [vegiseeds@rijkszwaan.com.au](mailto:vegiseeds@rijkszwaan.com.au) or call +61 3 5348900.

To learn more, view our range of blueleaf® Lebanese and Continental cucumber varieties at <https://www.rijkszwaan.com.au/blueleaf®>.

# Rijk Zwaan



## blueleaf®

The new standard for every cucumber grower

**Darker Leaves | Stronger Plants | Better Fruits**



### Advantages of blueleaf®

#### More photosynthetic activity

Blueleaf® varieties make better use of the available light.

#### More adaptive to environmental changes

A stronger crop is more active and responsive to sudden changes.

#### Better crop balance

A balanced plant produces better quality cucumbers for longer.

#### More power in the roots

More efficient transport of nutrients. This results in higher yields.

#### Blue-green colouring of the leaves

Healthier plants are stronger against pest and disease pressure.



### Blueleaf® varieties for every season

Lebanese	Continental
Craig RZ	Inyathi RZ
Lyman RZ	Insula RZ
Morris RZ	Litoral RZ
	Maritimo RZ
	Tantalos RZ

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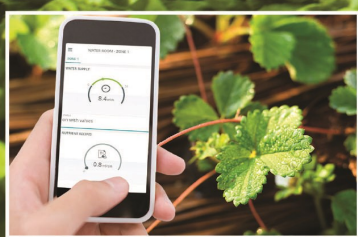
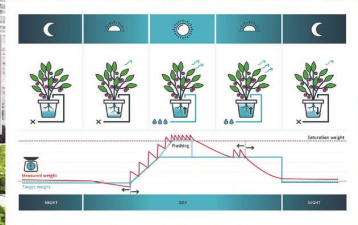


# POWERPLANTS AUSTRALIA

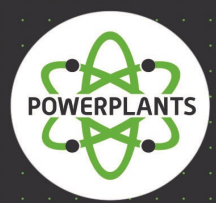


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