

Your Levy At Work



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Auscitrus: growing quality citrus safely with accredited excellence

Auscitrus maintains a commitment to providing its customers across Australia with top quality citrus budwood and seed.

Auscitrus' goal is to consistently produce healthy, true-to-type, and disease-tested citrus propagation materials. This dedication drives it to employ efficient and economically sustainable methods in its production processes.

To stay at the top of its game in a competitive landscape, Auscitrus prioritised achieving the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA). This accreditation upholds best management practice, ensuring that everything is grown to industry standard.

Situated in Dareton, New South Wales, Auscitrus employs four full-time staff as well as seasonal workers. The production nursery's main role is to provide the best varieties of propagation material at the highest health available worldwide, and to protect the health status of the Australian Citrus Industry.

Auscitrus' operations include producing and distributing budwood and rootstock seed, indexing and eliminating pathogens, maintaining virus-free and pre-immunised foundation trees, and importing new citrus cultivars.

What is the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia (NIASA)?

NIASA is the national nursery industry best management practice (BMP) program for production nurseries, growing media manufacturers and greenlife markets. It underpins the Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS) – a holistic system designed to ensure a sustainable future for the Australian nursery industry.



High standards for best practice management

Auscitrus started its NIASA accreditation journey in 2007. Board member, Tim Hermann, who has been Manager of Auscitrus since 2004, proposed the nursery's participation.

"From the start, I recognised the importance of the program," Tim said. "Going through the NIASA accreditation process has been key to helping the nursery set high standards for best practice management in processing and production.

"Implementing best management practices has been important for us. We put NIASA standards in place from the initial nursery construction. For example, we have always undertaken water treatment, and we designed the nursery flooring with gravel and special drainage pots to prevent plant contact with collected water.

"We regularly test our water quality, abiding by safe work requirements, and maintain up-to-date pest and disease records.

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"These substantial changes, coupled with minor yet essential tweaks, have significantly elevated our operational standards.

"The Greenlife Industry Australia (GIA) Extension Officer network, including Colin Hunt and his predecessors, has been invaluable. Their guidance and education on innovative technologies suited to our nursery have been instrumental. They not only introduced innovative tech but also ensured its suitability, and provided crucial system checks and educational support."

Why be accredited or certified?

Australian Plant Production Standard (APPS) credentials, like NIASA, EcoHort and/or BioSecure HACCP provide nurseries with real results, instant credibility, practical tools, ongoing support and affordable solutions.

This was true for Auscitrus.

"The primary opportunities and benefits for businesses pursuing NIASA accreditation are immense. It is not just about meeting production standards; it's about reaching the highest standards possible," Tim said.

"For any citrus-related business, maintaining these ambitious standards is key to staying competitive. NIASA accreditation was a clear indication of Auscitrus' commitment to achieving the best results and, in this way, maintaining respect and recognition within the industry."

When seeking suppliers, nurseries who are accredited or certified are well-respected by local governments, land care groups, farmers and the landscape industry.

Nurseries do not have to be GIA members to gain accreditation. Although if nurseries are GIA or Nursery & Garden Industry members, or a learning institution, they can access the programs at a discounted rate. Plus, program participation is tax deductible.

What's next for Auscitrus?

"In the next five to ten years, we envision Auscitrus building on its existing business model and expertise. We aim to collaborate with NIASA to develop a specialised program focused on disease-tested budwood, setting a new standard in the industry.

"All citrus nurseries should be using tested propagation material, the same as they use accredited potting media and products from other suppliers. Auscitrus is the only supplier of tested citrus seed and budwood in Australia."

"We can continue to develop our systems, protocols and facilities in line with best management practices by diligently following the guidelines. It gives us confidence that we are doing everything to an industry standard and ensuring longevity within our community."

For more information on accreditation and certification, visit greenlifeindustry.com.au/credentials

In addition, if you're interest in exploring NIASA certification, visit nurseryproductionfms.com.au or contact Greenlife Industry Australia at info@greenlifeindustry.com.au or on 1300 95 95 13.



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