

restrictions provided helpful hints for gardeners to become waterwise, while BHP Colorbond provided over 300 metres of steel fencing, used throughout the avenue.

Holmesglen Nursery, the nursery component of Holmesglen TAFE which achieved accreditation last year, had a bright and interesting display which reflected the nursery. Over 100 students from different horticultural departments at Holmesglen worked on constructing the display.

Promotions manager, Shaw Finlay, says accreditation gives businesses credibility within the industry, and it is important that customers realise some guarantee of quality and service is assured if they buy from an accredited garden centre.

The NGIV display provided information on accreditation in the nursery industry, assuring gardeners that: "Gardeners in Australia can now enjoy the benefit of an accreditation program covering every

aspect of the life of your plants, right up to the moment you purchase them.

"Accreditation under the Nursery Industry Accreditation programs has raised consumer confidence and heightened the level of industry professionalism to benefit you, the gardener."

The NGIV ran a competition (as it did last year), which involved consumers filling out surveys on accreditation. Completed were thousands of surveys, with many questions the same as those customers are asked when a garden centre seeks accreditation.

One thousand of the surveys will be forwarded to **Horticulture Australia Limited** and analysed to assess how accreditation is progressing.

Alan says the feedback from last year's survey was that people recognise the value of the accreditation schemes. They do not want to know the details, but they value quality assurance.

While some industry members may

question the level of consumer awareness of accreditation, Alan says the Accreditation Avenue at MIFGS is NGIV's best attempt to get the message out to consumers in Victoria.

"Consumers regard the Accreditation Avenue as an outstanding area of the show that is leading the charge to put the garden back into the garden show," he says.

Much of the public, and indeed members of the nursery and garden industry, are pleased to see this emphasis, Alan says.

The range of businesses involved in this year's avenue provided interest and variety for the public, complementing each other well. The same high standard and diversity are expected at next year's show.

*See this issue of Australian Horticulture for a full report on award winners at this year's Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show.*

**BELOW & RIGHT:** Proteaflora Nursery's display, which won a bronze award, highlighted drought-resistant, low water-requirement plants and demonstrated how colour, texture and variation can be achieved in home gardens.



This display in the Accreditation Avenue, which featured two stunning and unique copper water features, won a bronze award for Essendon Garden Centre.