

Putting 'garden' back

into 'garden show'

The Nursery & Garden Industry Victoria's Accreditation Avenue at this year's Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show successfully showcased the industry's accreditation schemes. Rachael Harris reports.

The Nursery & Garden Industry's accreditation schemes for garden centres and production nurseries were promoted to the Victorian gardening public of more than 130,000 people at this year's Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS).

This was done effectively via an Accreditation Avenue that was more than twice the size of last year's.

Featured were displays by seven garden centres — accredited as part of the Australian Garden Centre Accreditation Scheme, Australia (AGCAS) — and, for the first time, three production nurseries, which have Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia (NIASA) accreditation.

The participating garden centres included Western World Home & Garden, Essendon Garden Centre, Boyer's Nursery & Garden Centre and Holmesglen Nursery.

Garden centre development officer with Nursery & Garden Industry Victoria (NGIV), Alan Hollensen, who co-ordinated the Accreditation Avenue, says one of the strengths of this year's avenue was that it attracted three garden centres from regional Victoria.

These were Riverside Gardens Shepparton (Shepparton), Macdonalds Plants Plus Nursery (Bendigo) and Formosa Garden (Ballarat).

The production nurseries involved were Olinda Wholesale Nurseries, Proteaflora Nursery and Warner's Nurseries.

Four awards were received by displays in the avenue. Warner's Nurseries won the Horticultural Media Association award for best use of plant life within a design, as well as a silver award in the Outdoor Feature Display.

According to Warner's Nurseries, its garden featured popular plant species ideal for small courtyard gardens and which had low water requirements.

The plants were displayed at their best — clipped as a hedge or used as an espalier



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or topiary. Feature plants included *Magnolia* 'Little Gem', *Camellia japonica*, *Camellia sasanqua*, *Michelia* 'Scented pearl' and *Michelia longifolia alba*.

The display also included a range of perennials and ground covers, structural and accent plants, as well as mid-size hedging plants.

To help visitors, all plants were labelled. Available were information sheets detailing the plants and their uses.

The display focussed on how to improve drought-stressed plants. Information was given on cutting back, watering wisely and mulching and feeding.

Bronze Awards went to Proteaflora Nursery and Essendon Garden Centre in the Show Garden Display category.

Proteaflora Nursery's wonderful display also highlighted drought-resistant, low water-requirement plants from the proteaceae family. It included waratahs and demonstrated how colour, texture and variation can be achieved in home gardens.

Essendon Garden Centre's award-winning display featured two stunning and unique copper water features. Justin Taverniti says Essendon Garden Centre has been accredited for three years and



Popular plant species ideal for small courtyard gardens and which have low water requirements were the feature of Warner's Nurseries garden, which also won a Silver Award in the Outdoor Feature Display category.

promotes this fact on its letterhead and in its advertising.

The avenue also featured displays by principal sponsors, South East Water Ltd and BHP Colorbond. South East Water Ltd had a double site area and its display in this time of drought and water