

Number 18, June 2013

## Congress in Australia, October 6 to 11, 2013

### Time to book—the Australian dollar has dropped by about 10%

The Congress web site <http://www.igccaustralia2013.com> has all the information delegates will need at this time. The garden centres will be looking good as this is traditionally their busiest week of the year in Melbourne. Our football Grand Final will be over and Melbourne will be abuzz with excitement and entertainment as we head into horse racing & fashion.



Lunch in the MCG Member's Dining Room will be great



And here is how it looks from the outside

**Welcome to Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Do be sure to register your interest for the IGCA Congress in Australia.**

#### News from the President

The IGCA's administration is currently managed by Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA) who do a fantastic job in making sure that the board do what they are supposed to do when they are supposed to do it. Without their assistance, work at the IGCA would be a lot harder for those people volunteering on the board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank CNLA and the CNLA board for their ongoing support for the international garden community.



For the last number of years, Rebecca Doutré has assisted Victor Santacruz and has worked closely with a number of IGCA Presidents including me. At the Administrators meeting in Ireland, it was announced that she would be stepping down from work on the IGCA and will be replaced by Julia Ricottone. Those people that have worked with Rebecca know that she puts tremendous energy and commitment into everything that she does. A very big thank you to her for everything

that she has done for our community and we wish her well in her exciting new roles. Julia will be joining us in Australia and we look forward to getting to know her better.

Sue Allen (Past President) and Rachel Doyle (Vice- President) will be representing the IGCA at the Independent Garden Centre (IGC) Show in Chicago. If you are visiting the IGC Show, please be sure to pop in and visit the IGCA stand there. They will greatly appreciate the support and will love to meet members of our community there. For more information on the show, visit <http://igcshow.com>

The IGCA Facebook community is growing daily, and is an excellent platform to connect with other garden centres from around the world, and to get garden centre focused information. If you have not visited the page, please check it out at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

The IGCA is also very excited to announce our Twitter page at <https://twitter.com/IGCAAssociation>. Please head over to it and let us know what you think.

In October we are very excited to all meet in Australia. If you haven't already registered, please be sure to go to <http://www.igccaustralia2013.com> to register. See you in Australia!!!!

**Nick Stodel | Managing Director | Stodels Nurseries. EMail: [nick@stodels.com](mailto:nick@stodels.com) | [www.stodels.com](http://www.stodels.com)**

## Vice President Rachel Reports



### ***Greetings from Ireland***

After the worst spring for over 65 years summer has arrived and now we are playing catch up.

Plant sales were badly hit by not having a spring but it's all happening now and plant sales have greatly improved. The challenge now is to make the most of the short window of opportunity.

Garden centres who invested and expanded their offering to include giftware , furniture and especially café-restaurant have had less difficulty clawing back.

I believe that there are 'green shoots' starting to appear and customers are prepared to spend money again. We have a budget coming in September and we all have a concern about the effect of this on our last quarter.

**Bloom**, our equivalent of Chelsea Flower Show was held June Bank Holiday weekend. It was a tremendous success with an attendance of over 112,000 visitors. The quality of the display gardens was superb. In glorious sunshine Bord Bia showcased what Ireland has to offer in horticulture and artisan foods. We made contact with new suppliers which we believe will be beneficial to us over the next coming months.

We are so privileged to have a government body prepared to work with the industry to the level that **Bord Bia** does.

I look forward to meeting you all in Australia.

**Kind Regards, Rachel Doyle – Arboretum Garden Centre, Ireland. E: [rachel@arboretum.ie](mailto:rachel@arboretum.ie)**

**NB. There are some excellent images from Rachel and others and I have placed them on a separate document so that they are larger on the page.**

## IGCA & Canada E-News



October will be here before we know it and we will be very excited to see everyone at the IGCA Congress in Melbourne, Australia in October. It's going to be a great event and there will be lots to learn during the tours.

IGCA has partnered with FloraCulture International to share information and ideas worldwide. Their magazine is well known and respected at the international level, and now IGCA member countries will be able to share the magazine with their garden centre member businesses. If you saw the April and May issues, you may have noticed an article about us.

We are keeping you up to date through social media! Follow us on Twitter @IGCAAssociation to get the latest info on what is happening with IGCA. We'll continue to post more on our facebook page [www.facebook.com/IGCAAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/IGCAAssociation) and we appreciate all of our social media followers. Let's keep the conversation going!

### **Canada News**

Canadian garden centres are continuing to lead the way in environmental stewardship. This year, we are holding our fourth annual National Plastic Recycling Event. Member garden centres accept plastic pots back from their customers for recycling. Since the program went national, our members have diverted over 200,000 pounds of plastic from the landfill. This event has helped raise awareness of the issue, and many municipalities have also come on board accepting plant pots back in their kerbside recycling programs.

We are working on new ways to promote our members to the public, including listings on Canada's Garden Route website, which is a new initiative promoting garden tourism across the country. Members were also invited to plan activities in their communities on Canada's first National Garden Day, June 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Julia Riccotton, E: [julia@canadanursery.com](mailto:julia@canadanursery.com)**

## Hello from Germany



We were worried about our online shop olerum! For basic planning of our online shop we had to find ten more franchisers this spring. Due to the bad weather and considerable loss of revenue in the garden centers, we unfortunately couldn't win any new participants.

Despite significant increases in sales of about 25% in our online store this year, the necessary, positive forecast was not achieved in April and therefore we did not secure further funding of the shop. The entire project has been questioned. Finally our online shop could be saved by a new franchise member and additional financial commitments of some existing franchisers.

The current weather situation has been very hard for the garden centers - especially affected are nursery and shrubs. We actually have had to fight against heavy flooding in the south and east of Germany. However, the weather forecast is good again!

***Jutta Lenz, Executive Assistant, German Garden-Center Association***

## Klara's report from Hungary



In Hungary we had extraordinary weather in March - it was like winter, with snow, ice and blocked roads. Nothing happened in the gartencenters, even though in this time of the year, customers are eager to buy - and they do buy some green stuff.

Nothing, at all. The growers had to throw out their pansies, no-one really wanted to plant them, after the March snow and ice has melt.

We had lost 4 weeks of business, our people say. And this is quite hard.

In the last weeks we were fighting with our good old river, the Danube. We love our river, crossing our capital, but sometimes, she shows us her worse face. This was it now. As you might have heard about the flood news from Germany, we also had flood. But this time we were much better prepared than we were in 2001, when the water niveau of the Danube reached its historical highest point. This year it was even higher, 936 cm. People from all over the country were helping to put sand-sacks, even our Prime Minister was all over, wearing rubber boots, and inspecting all the critical venues. The flood has caused different problems, in different places.

In Budapest we managed, no one was injured, but some had to be evacuated of course.

As far as the horticultural business is concerned a kind of miracle is to be seen after the severe winter in March (Normally in March we have some spring weather) every fruit tree and all the flowers were breaking out with blooms - cherries, apples, grapes were blooming at the same time, and now harvesting almost the same time.

Pelargoniums were late blooming, there was lack of them in the garden centres - bedding plants are very good selling. Also the young plants of tomatoes, peppers and other kind of vegetables, fruit trees, people grow in their own gardens or balconies.

We have quite much rains, which is worth gold in May - as a Hungarian proverb says - but if it's too much in June, that can bring phytosanitary problems.

The spring season is over in the horticultural business, people are spending their money now on the summer vacation, no one is really willing to buy plants.

In short: we had a very unusual spring, and also very unusual season in the garden centres.

***Regards: Klara Biza. from Hungary, [biza.klara@gmail.com](mailto:biza.klara@gmail.com)***

## SPANISH RENEWAL TERRACES PLAN



This year, despite the late spring, the AECJ organized a RENEWAL PLAN TERRACES.

The objectives of this campaign are to present eight possible scenarios for terraces, decks, patios or balconies with different styles for the regular customer not a garden center, to be attracted by economic development.

Most garden partners have made use of graphic material supplied free of charge (banners, stickers, images, guides, brochures, etc.) and digital materials. In many of those visited, gardens have created a space where they have included planters, bags substrates and ideas combined with plants.

We've sent press releases and created a micro site for customers to locate the associated garden centers.

[www.planrenoveterrazas.com](http://www.planrenoveterrazas.com) also has campaigned on social networks like Facebook and Twitter

<https://www.facebook.com/VerdeesVidaJardineria> in which currently is making a photo contest among participant's terraces. The economic performances have not fully shown up yet but the garden providers are convinced that this campaign is helping them sell more.

**Kind Regards, Santiago González – Director AECJ Spain. E: [info@aecj.org](mailto:info@aecj.org)**

**Great photos on the images PDF.**

## Sales of plants in the heart of the turmoil—France



After a series of fairly good spring and statements from meteorologists confirming that spring is the season which tends to warm the most, one might believe away from 'bad seasons'. In late May, the situation is weak and poor positive indicators, only vegetable plants seem to pull their game.

The course of the season has been particularly difficult to follow for producers. They had heat to compensate for the lack of sunshine and fight against moisture. They also had to cope with indecision and reluctance to take the risk of garden supplies, causing handling and fees.

Garden center side, changes are delicate through various channels and methods of sale. The consequences of bad March are heavy enough on specialized distribution. The drop in customers due to bad weather has not only affected the sales of ornamental plants, but also of other ranges (substrates, fertilizers, garden design, barbecues, furniture);

The florists have also been affected equally by the economic and météorologies consequences. Even calendar events dedicated as 1 May and Mother's Day have not boosted trade.

All is not lost, some of the delay can still be caught; unsold April and May may be able to satisfy any late application for highly developed plants.

**Christiane Weiller, [cweiller@fnmj.com](mailto:cweiller@fnmj.com)**

## The Japanese Report

**Green Curtain—see image PDF for photos.**



Vine is very popular this year again in Japan.

The summer heat has become a major source of concern in recent years. Therefore vine has attracted interest as 'Green Curtain' which covered outside of windows and cut off the rays of the sun. That also is effective to save electricity, we must need it to do after stopping of nuclear power caused by big disaster TSUNAMI. And it increased pleasure of eating fruits and to care of the heart.

It's popular Bitter melon, Ipomoea, Luffa, Cucumber, Passion fruit, etc as vine plants. New varieties are gaining a lot of attention every year, because Breeding has also been active. Off course we can also sell other relative materials like planters, soil, a support, net.

**Akihiro Ozaki, Ozaki Flower Park, [a.ozaki@ozaki-flowerpark.co.jp](mailto:a.ozaki@ozaki-flowerpark.co.jp)**

## Gerdie keeps us in touch from South Africa



Our GCA Competition 2013 Awards were announced at the annual SANA Convention in May. The top honour of Garden Centre of the Year 2013 was awarded to Stodels Nurseries Milnerton and Home Store of the Year 2013 went to Builders Warehouse Port Elizabeth. As results were announced, it was posted live on Facebook which added to the excitement for members who did not attend the event. During this period we gained 50 fans due to being live throughout the awards ceremony. Have a look on <http://www.facebook.com/sanurseryassociation?ref=hl>.

Southern parts of South Africa have seen excessively high rainfall that has slowed sales down. A mild Autumn in northern regions have resulted in good general trade but a slight delay in planting of winter bedding plants. General positive sentiment amongst members remains quite strong.

Our marketing campaign, [www.lifeisagarden.co.za](http://www.lifeisagarden.co.za), is focusing on the concept that gardening is easy and is making use of social media to bring the message across. We have created the first YouTube clip 'Gardening is Childs Play' giving step-by-step directions for planting <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3mDoppsFE>. In addition, they have created a Kids Activity Page on Facebook that features weekly kids activities to expose the younger generation to gardening in a fun and playful way. To enhance our campaign and give exposure to consumers, the message is supported by regular print media and POS that is available for retailers to use in their garden centres.

**Gerdie Olivier, [gerdie@sana.co.za](mailto:gerdie@sana.co.za)**



*Nick seems to be enjoying this Award Presentation*

## Growing our Share



Perth has had a wonderful autumn with rainfall close to average. With the start to winter we have enjoyed a number of typical cold fronts pass through, often at night. It is a nursery person's dream to wake to showers, clearing to a fine day. Trade has been brisk with sales of herbs, vegetable seedlings and citrus our star performers. After such a hot and dry summer, Western Australian gardeners just love the rain that winter brings and are busy planting to replace the plant casualties of summer.

### ***Garden Retailer's get-together***

In late May, GCA members, in association with the nursery and landscape industry associations (NIAWA and LIAWA), enjoyed an inspiring evening with Wes Fleming. Just returned from London with his success at Chelsea Flower Show, the ever entertaining Wes Fleming provided a diverse presentation on the history of the Australian gardens at Chelsea. We were delighted to see Power Point photos of the award-winning 2013 garden.

('Best in Show') In the second half of the evening, we enjoyed the take from Wes on pruning and caring for bare rooted fruit and deciduous trees, a casual and encouraging instruction. The numbers for this Garden Retailers Workshop exceeded expectation with over 110 attendees.

**Jackie Hooper, Zanthorrea Nursery, [Jackie@zanthorrea.com.au](mailto:Jackie@zanthorrea.com.au)**

## Queensland – Australia Report



Autumn trade in the 'sunshine' state continues to be difficult and adverse weather on weekends didn't help! Members reported highly variable sales with one month being ok and the next poor. This trend continued into Mother's Day which, from all accounts, was a little disappointing.

After talking with many retailers lately, it does appear a clear trend is continuing to gain momentum in garden centres - fashion with plants. Sales of large pots are in decline but the sales of indoor colour plants and small pots have dramatically increased over the past twelve months for many retailers. The consumers are being attracted by bright coloured pots, flowers and are looking for plants to decorate tables, rooms and other indoor living areas.

Consumers are still being attracted by new plants, flowering plants and small exotics which are still opportunities for retailers to capitalise on. There are still many people in garden centres but prying those coins from their purses is proving a hard grind. Clear fine days of winter and beautiful displays in our garden centres will help trade.

**Jason Searle, GardenWay Home & Garden. [jcsearle@searle.com.au](mailto:jcsearle@searle.com.au)**

## Garden Centres of Australia President Milton reports from South Australia



Trade through the later part of summer in SA was good without being super. The warm dry summer did not stop people spending time in their garden. I think where we had a dry season and we did not have water restrictions so people were happy to just keep things watered. I also think most urban people think water comes out of a tap and not the sky like us in the industry.

Late autumn rains held off the sales till later in April and into May, but again good sunny weather kept customers shopping much later in the season than usual.

Grow your own is still hot with customers knocking down the doors to get their bare root fruit trees in. Veggies, herbs and soft fruits are also in strong demand. Colour again keeps making strong growth. I.e. seedlings, potted colour and flowing shrub lines. Outdoor living made a late run in the season and cafes are holding their own.

Well, in these tough times I look back and see how fortunate our industry is to be selling a product that is still in demand and less subject to recession. We have seen our busiest trading year ever and I see no reason why that will change in the future.

**Milton Vadoulis, Vadoulis Garden Centre South Australia, E: [miltonvadoulis@bigpond.com](mailto:miltonvadoulis@bigpond.com)**

**Cheers everyone, Leigh Siebler, IGCA E-News Editor [E: leigh@gravity.net.au](mailto:leigh@gravity.net.au)**

**For further information on the Congress please contact Leigh Siebler at Garden Centres of Australia.**

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