

GoldCoast Waterfuture

Alexanders Nursery Water-efficient business profile

Alexanders Nursery has championed water conservation through its own business water savings, educating customers and working within the industry and the wider community.



Alexanders Nursery has been a production nursery for over 26 years, being established in 1979.

Situated on the northern Gold Coast the company has specialised in supplying landscape plants to the nursery, landscape and building industries throughout South-East Queensland.

Alexanders Nursery has built a reputation for high quality products and exceptional service over the years, resulting in a number of industry awards:

1997 – Family Business of the Year Awards – second runner up in category

1999 – Grower of the Year – Qld Nursery Industry Association

The company has been a leader on the Gold Coast in best management practice and has been accredited since 2002 in the Australian industry's own best management practice scheme (NIASA).

Water conservation approach

“The company has always been aware of water being a limited natural resource, and that it was essential to be efficient in its use. Water is vital to a plant nursery not only in quantity, but also in its quality,” *Alex & Mirella Jakimoff (Directors)*.

Reticulation of water has always been implemented at Alexanders Nursery. After attendance at an industry run water management workshop in 1993 and a subsequent Waterworks workshop, a new more efficient irrigation system was installed.

The cost of producing quantities of high quality water was rising, and reducing costs kept the nursery's product more competitive.

Furthermore, the greater uniformity of water distribution among crops also had the benefit of greater uniformity of crop quality, which promised economic returns.

Water savings are achieved through the following measures:

- More uniform sprinkler coverage enabling reduced irrigation time.
- More efficient layout increases uniformity of irrigation which enables reduced irrigation.
- Slower irrigation application reduces wasted run-off through potting mix drainage.
- More absorbent potting mix reduces irrigation frequency.
- Better potting mix rewettability enables reduced irrigation time.
- Grouping of plants with lower water requirements in one section, which can then be irrigated less frequently.

Water conservation objectives

The irrigation system included parameters that needed to be improved. That is, reducing the scheduling coefficient below 1.5, a coefficient of uniformity greater than 85% and a mean application rate of less than the potting mix absorption rate (less than 15mm per hour).

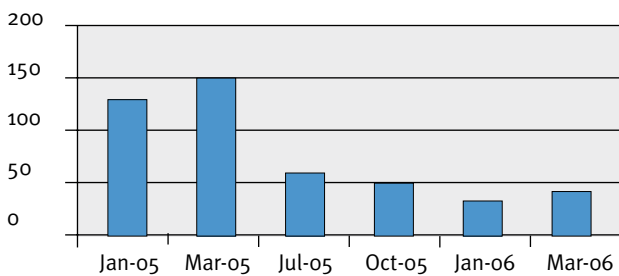
These parameters were established after attending industry run workshops on water management. More recent workshops, including Gold Coast Water's Watersaver Nursery Industry Training, have kept the nursery up to date on the latest techniques.

Improvements in the water holding capacity and rewettability of potting mix also resulted from attendance at industry workshops and field days.

Actual savings achieved from water conservation approach

Alexanders Nursery's water conservation approach has significantly reduced the business' water consumption since March 2005.

Water consumption (kL)



Ongoing water conservation efforts

Further savings will be made as a new dripper irrigation system is installed for more advanced plant stock, which will dramatically increase water efficiency.

Alexanders Nursery is committed to the long-term goal of water conservation education – educating both residents and the industry through a variety of mediums on water efficient techniques in landscaping.