



BIRDWOOD NURSERY WATER USE EFFICIENCY

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*Mr Peter Young (owner
Birdwood Nursery)*

Birdwood Nursery is located in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast at Woombye just south of Nambour. The 24.67 hectare nursery site produces in excess of 200,000 fruit trees annually from 3 hectares of intensive growing area. Trees of the highest quality are supplied to commercial growers and the retail industry throughout Queensland and interstate. Birdwood Nursery is owned by Peter and Sandra Young and has been in operation for more than thirty three years with a strong reputation as a reliable supplier of only the highest quality fruit trees. Birdwood Nursery proudly operates under the Nursery Production Farm Management System. In March 1993, Birdwood Nursery became accredited under NIASA, the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia, in recognition of their commitment to best practice.

Birdwood Nursery also obtained EcoHort certification under the industry’s environmental management program in 2006 in recognition of their continued environmental commitment.

In March 2011, Birdwood Nursery became the first production nursery in Australia to receive the industry’s BioSecure HACCP certification for their on-farm bio-security.

Birdwood Nursery is an acknowledged leader in its field and has been announced winner ‘Best Large Production Nursery’ for three consecutive years at the Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland’s awards presentation.

Birdwood Nursery was further recognised in 2011 with the presentation of the inaugural ‘Australian Biosecurity Farmer of the Year’ award for their commitment to improving on-farm bio-security.



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The 2 hectare growing facility at Birdwood Nursery has been complemented with the construction of a new 'state of the art' production facility. The 1.04 hectare shade structure has been constructed to industry best practice over a number of years until almost full production was achieved in 2011.

"The new shade structure provides many tangible benefits to the day to day operation of the nursery including reductions in water use and improvements in plant quality" said Mr Peter Young owner of Birdwood Nursery.

The one hectare growing shed has been designed with a sophisticated above and below ground drainage system to channel all irrigation wastewater and any rain events to the on-site storage. Each growing bed is constructed with an impervious plastic barrier covered with a geotextile fabric, covered to a depth of 10cm with 20mm gravel and then covered with weedmat material. A series of underground drains have been located within each growing bed.

The irrigation system is designed to meet industry best practice and provide the flexibility required in a large production nursery. Catchcan assessment of the Antelco Rotor Max sprinklers spaced 5m apart reveal the system operating with a Mean Application Rate (MAR) of 11.5mm/hr, a Coefficient of Uniformity (CU) of 92% and a Scheduling Coefficient (SC) of 1.3. "The irrigation is now more uniform providing improved scheduling options that deliver significant water savings and flow-on benefits" said Denis Roe technical manager at Birdwood Nursery.

The new shade covered area offers improved access to the crop allowing efficiencies in material handling. Palletisation has lead to reductions in manual plant movements, easing the workload on staff, providing faster stock turnarounds and reducing costs. The open space and free access to crops also provide opportunities to better monitor for pest and disease along with improved access for pesticide applications. The improved access to the crop reduces the costs involved with crop maintenance and the selection, picking and packing of customer orders.



Nursery & Garden Industry
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The SEQ-IF program is a partnership between the Nursery & Garden Industry Qld. and the Queensland Government to provide on-farm support to growers in Water Use Efficiency and the Nursery Production Farm Management System through on-farm assessments, information support and training.