

An intellectual approach to plant sales

Lyndale Nurseries, NZ

Malcolm Woolmore from Lyndale Nursery in New Zealand has an interesting story to tell about not just selling plants, but selling their intellectual interests in plants.

Malcolm Woolmore felt the market in New Zealand was getting tighter and price considerations were getting even worse. A bold move was needed and Lyndale Nursery took it. We'll let Malcolm Woolmore tell the story.

"The world market is about producing plants at a price. We were exporting quite significant quantities of camellias to England but we found that the market was getting tighter and tighter.

"We formed a sub-shoot of the nursery and called it Lyndale Intellectual Property, which has a brand called KiwiGold, and we market around the world using that name. So we have taken the approach of selling the intellectual property.

"We have a network of partners around the world, and they have a territory like the United States or Europe or Japan or Australia, for example, and they represent us and all the other agents' intellectual property. If they can see some moneymaking opportunities for their industry, then they will license growers within their territory to produce these particular items. That sets up a royalty stream back to the breeder.

"In some cases we are the breeder and in most cases we represent the breeders.

"So for the breeders it is a controllable market where they can know that their product is under control and is accounted for and they get a return.

"One of the unique things about this system is we have a basic principle that says that 50% of all the royalties goes back to the breeder. The other 50% is divided among the other agents.

"That is a very clear proposition for breeders to understand – they get half of any total royalty."



Lyndale's export team preparing specimen *Libertia Goldfinger* to feature in the NZ Garden at the Chelsea Flower show

Protection for breeders

With considerable expertise in intellectual property, Robert Bett fronts Lyndale Intellectual Property and Lyndale's ongoing success in finding new plants. He believes the key for growers' success internationally is to have an agent like Lyndale who can guide breeders and growers through protection and marketing of their new plants, supported by an established and trusted global network.

The major rights protection agreement internationally is called the UPOV Agreement (International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants). It's a patent system involving physical plant trialing to which most countries are signatories. The exception is the United States, where trialing is not required, replaced by only a written application for patent.

Working with Scotts and Osmocote

Malcolm interacts with Scotts regularly, specifically in the production of their own potting mix. Lyndale controls what goes into its own mix – also tailoring orders for other growers - but always includes Osmocote.

"This will surprise a lot of people but we use 12 to 14-month Osmocote Lo-Start. As a liner grower (NZ for tube stock) a lot of people would say, 'why on earth are you using that?' The answer is that the release curve really sets the line of production.

“Nicola Rochester, Scotts NZ Regional Sales Manager, suggested it because we had talked about the type of release pattern we were looking for. We actually didn’t want a lot of release just when they are first potted, we wanted a continuous, flat release pattern. And Lo-Start was the Osmocote product that stood out as offering what we needed.

“We started using it and found it really suited us. We talked about it with other nurseries and they were keen to try it out, too.

“We put enough fertiliser in the plant so that when our clients have planted them into the next size pot or into the ground, the plants will really take off and flourish.

“And the only way we can be sure of that is if the fertiliser is still credible when we sell it. That’s why 12 to 14 month Osmocote Lo-Start is perfect for us.”



Lyndale's eight mist-propagation houses provide an ideal, controlled environment

Picking the international trends

There are 968 plants in the Lyndale catalogue that are available at different times of the year. But as every grower knows, picking plant trends is a tricky thing.

“We can play a fair role in indicating what we think the trends are,” says Malcolm. “And people will often listen to us. We can put plants in the public’s eye that reflect that sort of trend – the right sort of colour, the right sort of form - and it drives everything from there.

“One of the most exciting crops we are promoting overseas is a New Zealand native plant called *Libertia*. Lyndale are promoting two selections, *Libertia ixioides* ('Taupo Blaze') and *Libertia* 'Goldfinger'.

“They are very new plants to the United States and Europe. We represent 'Goldfinger' overseas for a New Zealand owner. It looks at the moment like it is really going to take the USA by storm. Might be our first million unit seller.

“We have also been involved with some very exciting new magnolias. The US market is potentially very big for these. They’re fast growing, compact and relatively small. And importantly in the US market, they still maintain that tree-like structure but on a dwarfed scale.”



Changing from green through yellow/orange to strong orange to intense burnt red, *Libertia* 'Taupo Blaze' produces pure white star like flowers followed by attractive orange/red berries



The golden yellow cascading foliage of *Libertia* Goldfinger has a prominent golden yellow central stripe. Profusions of pure white star like flowers are followed by attractive large yellow berries.