



Information Pack

Contents

Plant of the Year	1
Overview	2
Prizes	2
Process.....	4
Key dates and deadlines.....	5
Eligibility and entry requirements.....	6
Judging criteria.....	7

Overview

Established by Greenlife Industry Victoria (GIV) in 2024 to recognise outstanding plant varieties, stimulate and foster innovation and interest in the sector and educate the public about the value and importance of diverse plant species, the Plant of the Year award is the most prestigious award in the Australian horticulture sector.

Each organisation's application will be assessed as part of a single Plant of the Year program.

The judging panel will determine:

- 1 x Plant of the Year Winner
- 2 x Finalists

The program is designed to recognise outstanding plant varieties that demonstrate excellence in consumer appeal, garden performance, innovation, and market potential.

Plant of the Year is intended to celebrate plants that can successfully connect with consumers while also demonstrating strong horticultural and commercial value.

Prizes

The winning overall **Plant of the Year** will be awarded:

- Use of a licensed custom Plant of the Year badge/logo for promotion of the plant, including labels.
- Plant of the Year branded digital graphics and tiles for the winning organisation
- Plant of the Year point of sale material for print and use at garden centres
- Industry facing GIV promotional package including:
 - Extensive coverage in GIV's industry magazine Groundswell
 - Announcements in industry e-newsletter (reach of 4,500+)
 - Social media posts
- Plaque/trophy
- External media briefing for industry publications
 - Timed media release, coordination and support for any media opportunities
 - Information on the GIV Plant of the Year website
- Opportunities at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS):
 - Finalist plants to be featured at various touchpoints at MIFGS during the applicable award year
 - Displayed in stage presentation area(s) throughout the Show.
 - Featured in dedicated GIV Plant of the Year display (both public and industry facing)

- Opportunity to create a striking, stand-alone display in a prominent show location, with site provided free-of-charge (curation and delivery at cost of winner, consultation with GIV and event organisers required)
- Opportunity to engage directly with the public through main stage presentation
- Inclusion in MIFGS digital show program
- Digital marketing in the lead up to and during the show through MIFGS channels reaching an engaged audience of over 260K (social media posts, e-newsletter articles)
- Winning plant details included in media briefing packs relating to MIFGS
- Support to distribute plant through retail channels at the show

Finalists will receive:

- Recognition as an official Plant of the Year Finalist
- Use of a licensed custom badge/logo for promotion of the plant, including labels.
- Branded digital graphics and tiles for the winning organisation
- Point of sale material for print and use at garden centres
- Industry facing GIV promotional package including:
 - Extensive coverage in GIV's industry magazine Groundswell
 - Announcements in industry e-newsletter (reach of 4,500+)
 - Social media posts
- Plaque/trophy
- External media briefing for industry publications
 - Timed media release, coordination and support for any media opportunities
 - Information on the GIV Plant of the Year website
- Participation opportunities through Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) and Plant of the Year promotional activities
 - Winning plant to be featured at various touchpoints at MIFGS 2027
 - Displayed in stage presentation area(s) throughout the Show.
 - Inclusion in dedicated GIV Plant of the Year display (both public and industry facing)
 - Digital marketing in the lead up to and during the show through MIFGS channels reaching an engaged audience of over 260K (social media posts, e-newsletter stories)
 - Winning plant details included in media briefing packs relating to MIFGS
 - Support to distribute plant through retail channels at the show

Winners and finalists must:

- Participate in agreed GIV and MIFGS promotional activities where reasonably possible
- Make plants available for display and promotional opportunities at MIFGS
- Use supplied Plant of the Year branding and promotional assets in accordance with GIV brand guidelines

- All Plant of the Year branding, logos and promotional assets remain the property of GIV and may only be used in accordance with GIV guidelines and approved award recognition periods
- Support reasonable media, marketing and storytelling opportunities associated with the program
- Winning and finalist plants must be commercially available and capable of supply through appropriate retail sales channels during the award year, including independent retail and national retail opportunities where applicable

Process

An organisation must submit one application per plant entered. Organisations may enter multiple plants in any given year.

Each application will incur an entry fee being:

- \$1250 ex GST for NGI members; and
- \$1950 ex GST for non-NGI members.

Each plant entry will incur a fee.

Entering 2027 or 2028

For this year only, applications are open for both the 2027 and 2028 award cycles.

Applicants should select the award year that best aligns with the plant's expected commercial availability. Plants may be entered into both years where appropriate, however a separate entry fee applies to each entry.

Applications for both award years will be assessed concurrently during the 2026 judging period.

Applications must be made using the GIV application form, and the complete application form, entry fee and all required supporting evidence must be received by GIV by 2 November 2026.

Specific terms and conditions for entering the competition are set out on the application form. Once an application has been received, GIV will review it to ensure it meets all application/documentation/evidence requirements. If further information is requested by GIV, this must be received before 2 November 2025.

Compliant applications will then be referred to the external judging panel, comprising horticultural, industry, retail and market representatives as determined by GIV, to individually judge and score the application. The judging criteria are set out in the table below.

Once applications have closed, and individual judging has been completed, the judging panel will come together, to view the plants in person. Plants must be made available for viewing at Melbourne University Burnley Campus soon after

applications have closed (date for drop off TBC) to be eligible for awards. The Judges will then discuss and score each application, determining:

- 1 x Plant of the Year Winner
- 2 x Finalists

The Plant of the Year winner and the 2 finalists will be chosen by the judging panel, and all information provided in the application, and other matters the judging panel thinks are relevant, will be taken into consideration.

Each decision of the judging panel is final and binding and may not be challenged by any person. The judging panel reserves the right not to award a winner where entries are not considered to meet the required standard.

- The 2027 Plant of the Year Winner and Finalists will be publicly announced to the industry at Australian Horticultural Trials Week in December 2026 and again to the public at MIFGS 2027
- The 2028 Plant of the Year Winner and Finalists will be announced to the industry at Australian Horticultural Trials Week in December 2026 but will remain confidential and embargoed from public release until December 2027.
 - Entrants, winners and finalists for future award years subject to embargo agree to maintain confidentiality until the official public announcement date determined by GIV.
- Following the 2026 transition process, the program will operate approximately one year in advance to support production planning, retail readiness, and consumer promotion.
- MIFGS 2027 will see award winners announced to the general public, with a special display dedicated to the overall winner.

Key dates and deadlines

Applications open:	22 June 2026
Applications close:	2 November 2026
Winners announcement to industry and media:	Australian Horticultural Trials Week Dinner 2026
Winners announcement and display to public:	MIFGS 2027

Eligibility and entry requirements

- Plants have not been entered before into the GIV Plant of the Year.
- Applications are open to all cultivars.
- An organisation which is a plant breeder, grower or seller may enter.
- An applicant must be able to prove that it is entitled to enter the plant.
- Plant must be available for sale in January of the year of their award (being the year following the year in which the submissions are due).
- Entry fees:
 - \$1250 ex GST for NGI members
 - \$1950 ex GST for non-NGI members

Entrants must provide evidence of:

- Expected retail availability timing
- Production capability and supply capacity
- Ability to support market demand generated through the program
- Commitment to supplying agreed promotional and retail opportunities associated with Plant of the Year and MIFGS

GIV reserves the right to withdraw promotional participation, finalist status, or winner recognition where supply commitments, promotional obligations, or eligibility requirements are not reasonably met.

Judging criteria

CRITERION	SCORING CRITERIA	%
<p>Sensory appeal</p>	<p>The plant will be evaluated based on its aesthetics, and overall visual impact, considering colour, form/habit, and texture, as well as unique or striking colours, patterns, fruit, foliage, and distinctive features that distinguish it within its botanical rank (genus, species).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour – vibrancy, patterns, longevity, consistency, amount of colour 50% • Form/habit, texture, and other sensory elements if applicable 50% <p>Applicants should consider including in their application, photographic evidence of the entry across a range of sites and seasons, noting the visual attributes/traits of appeal. Higher scores will be awarded for evidence presented that highlights the attributes in detail.</p>	<p>40%</p>
<p>Growth & performance</p>	<p>The plant will be evaluated on its ability to exhibit consistent and reliable performance, thrive with minimal inputs and resources, achieve excellent growth both in establishment and over the long term, display resistance to pests and diseases, tolerate environmental constraints, and demonstrate robustness in cultivation across diverse climate zones and versatility in garden or landscape applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires low or minimal inputs to sustain satisfactory growth, performance and visual outcomes, including nutrition, irrigation, labour, etc. 50% • Adaptability to a wide range of environmental and biological stresses 50% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High pest disease resistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resistance to diseases and pests and/or rapid recovery from infestation. ▪ Reduced need for chemical interventions or treatments. ○ High tolerance to environmental factors (Light/shade, drought, waterlogging, soil compaction, soil salinity, air-borne salt, soil pH, etc) 	<p>40%</p>

	<p>As with the previous criterion, entrants will score higher if they present a broad range of evidence, with higher scores given to independent testing, evaluation and trialling. Evidence for growth in establishment and over the long term should be provided by the applicant.</p>	
<p>Innovation & Marketability</p>	<p>The applicant should identify where innovation lies with the plant, considering: 50%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of inventive plant traits, such as compactness or enhanced disease resistance. • Relevance to contemporary applications and uses. • Originality as a new cultivar or a unique variation of a species, with evidence provided of the origins of the plant and breeder acknowledgment. <p>The plant will be evaluated on its potential commercial viability and alignment with market demand, as well as its uniqueness, origin story, or special attributes that enhance its appeal to consumers. Furthermore, judges will consider its recreational value for both home gardeners and public spaces and educational potential for botanic gardens, schools, and horticultural programs. 50%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial potential • Uniqueness • Origin story • Innovative marketing strategies that set it apart • Recreational value for home gardeners or public spaces • Educational potential for botanic gardens, schools, or horticultural programs. 	<p>20%</p>