

AUSSIE COLOURS

COMMERCIALISATION STORIES

BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS FROM DROUGHT-RESISTANT AUSTRALIAN NATIVE SHRUBS



Australian native flora is being selected and bred to take to a new generation of drought hardy Australian native shrubs to homes and gardens.

UQ'S RESEARCH EXCELLENCE TO EXCELLENCE PLUS WITH UNIQUEST

UQ Research Strength:	Agriculture and Food Sciences
UQ Innovator(s):	Professor Daryl Joyce Dr Margaret Johnston Dr Melinda Perkins Dr Dion Harrison
UQ Faculty or Institute:	Faculty of Science
UQ Research Outcome:	Selection and breeding of drought-tolerant varieties of Australian native shrubs
UniQuest IP Position:	Plant breeders rights and trademark
UniQuest Partnering:	Pitch product opportunity to garden centres, nurseries, retail stores, orchid enthusiasts and investors
UniQuest Commercialisation:	License IP to Aussie Colours Pty Ltd to develop and commercialise specific plant species

AUSSIE COLOURS

Behind the simple beauty of an Aussie Colours® flower, lies a highly technical plant selection and breeding program which began at The University of Queensland (UQ).

Aussie Colours Pty Limited is a start up company out of UQ to maximise the commercial potential of products developed by Professor Daryl Joyce, Dr Margaret Johnston, Dr Melinda Perkins and Dr Dion Harrison in the School of Agriculture & Food Sciences and the Centre for Native Floriculture's Australian Plant Breeding Program at UQ's Gatton Campus.

The academic aim of the breeding program is to protect threatened species. The selection, manipulation and breeding program has resulted in the successful release of more than 20 drought-tolerant plant varieties in Australia, and many more in development.

It was apparent to UniQuest that the research outcome also represented an opportunity to commercialise the range of year round colourful, drought-resistant flowers from the Australian environment.

FLOWER POWERED BUSINESS

Aussie Colours® was established by UniQuest, the main commercialisation company of UQ, in 2007. Aussie Colours® has the exclusive, worldwide licence for a very special range of plants that have been selected or bred for Australian gardens and landscapes. As a unique and highly specialised plant breeding, licensing and marketing company, the company is changing the face of Australian flora.

The Aussie Colours® range of plants are in demand for their ornamental appeal as well as their water efficient qualities, and have featured on a number of popular gardening shows, current affairs programs, and in newspapers and magazines. Developed to thrive in hot and dry conditions, as well as humidity, their vibrant colours are brightening Australia's landscape.



AUSSIE COLOURS

COMMERCIALISATION

The start up company Aussie Colours has been supported by public and private investment. It was successful in its application for A\$800,000 in funding from the Australian Government's Commercialisation of Emerging Technologies (COMET) program, \$250,000 from Commercialisation Australia and attracted A\$465,000 from the Brisbane Angels and the Queensland Government-owned teQstart Pty Ltd.

From its humble beginnings selling more than 60,000 plants from its initial product range, the Outback Princess, the company now has a dedicated group of licensed propagators and growers to produce and distribute the Aussie Colours® product range. The specially bred plants are sold to the public by independent garden centres and retail stores throughout Australia.

Cut flowers of the Outback Princess varieties have been sold to Japan and the Gomphrena plant was released on the North American market in 2010. Aussie Colours is currently focusing on its next phase of growth, which includes further international market development.

One of the most successful product releases has been 'Gold Dust' which is an abundantly flowering Australian shrub with striking yellow flowers and green-grey foliage. Much sought after by gardening enthusiasts, this quintessentially Australian coloured plant was launched in 2012 to commemorate Australia Day.

"As researchers, it is nice to see our efforts bring pleasure to fellow Australians and encourage more landscapes to include these beautiful native plants."

Dr Dion Harrison

Principal Plant Breeding Consultant, Aussie Colours®

RARE SPECIES BREEDING SUCCESS

Not only is the Aussie Colours® team developing new flora varieties, they are also using their plant breeding expertise to save Australia's endangered plant species. Recently their plant breeding skills came to the rescue of the Giant Swamp Orchid and the Yellow Swamp Orchid.

The Giant Swamp Orchid has attractive sulphur-yellow flowers and is one of Australia's largest terrestrial orchids. They are an endangered species due to over-collecting from the wild and significant habitat destruction from over-development.

The Yellow Swamp Orchid and its red-brown flowers were almost extinct. Despite historic records of the species being collected from Peel Island, Bribie Island, and Noosa Heads, in 1992 only 20 flowering plants were known to exist. They were growing in one area of 60 metres by 10 metres on Stradbroke Island.

Due to the hard work of the researchers behind Aussie Colours, both of these endangered Phaius orchids are now in commercial production. The range of Phaius orchids have been named 'Aussie Giant' because they are so large, and the flower spikes can be two metres high – taller than the average Australian.

Given the rarity of these orchids in the environment, the Aussie Giants are in high market demand from nurseries as well as passionate Phaius orchid enthusiasts.

COMMERCIALISATION STORIES

PARTNER WITH UNIQUEST

UniQuest is one of Australia's leading research commercialisation companies. It specialises in global technology transfer and facilitates access for all business sectors to the world class expertise, intellectual property and facilities at The University of Queensland, Australia.

OUR TRACK RECORD

UniQuest enters into over 400 research contracts per year – many repeat clients from industry.

UniQuest has created over 70 companies from its intellectual property portfolio, and since 2000 UniQuest and its start ups have raised more than \$490 million to take university technologies to market. UQ technologies licensed by UniQuest – including UQ's cervical cancer vaccine technology and image correction technology in magnetic resonance imaging machines – have resulted in combined sales of final products in the order of \$10 billion net sales between 2007-2013.



If you want to know more about this commercialisation story or other offerings from Science and UniQuest then contact Dr Judy Halliday, Senior Director – Science in IP Commercialisation by mobile +61 (0)407 744 789, email j.halliday@uniquet.com.au or visit www.uniquet.com.au

THE AUSSIE COLOURS JOURNEY SO FAR

- Aussie Colours is highly specialised plant breeding, licensing and marketing company established by UniQuest in 2007.
- The start up company has attracted over half a million dollars investment from public and private sources to develop and commercialise specific plant species.
- The Aussie Colours® range of plants are in demand for their ornamental appeal as well as their water efficient qualities, and have featured on a number of popular gardening shows, current affairs programs, and in newspapers and magazines.
- The company has a dedicated group of licensed propagators and growers to produce and distribute the Aussie Colours® product range. Product is sold to the public by independent garden centres and retail stores throughout Australia and more recently North America. Cut flowers of Outback Princess have been sold in Japan.
- The Aussie Colours team are also using their plant breeding expertise to save Australia's endangered plant species.