PEERING OVER THE FENCE: AN UPDATE ON THE GARDENING RESPONSIBLY MOVEMENT

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SUMMARY

Over 72% of environmental weeds in Australia are garden escapes. There is a strong desire within industry, government and the community to reduce the use of ‘weedy’ ornamental plants to prevent future weed invasions. Gardening Responsibly is an industry-led initiative providing tools to assess the invasive risk of ornamental plants in trade. Using high quality science and a certification scheme Gardening Responsibly is working to reduce the sale and use of high-risk plants and promote the use of certified low-risk plants. The Gardening Responsibly initiative aims to ultimately elicit long-term attitudinal and behavioral change to generate positive environmental outcomes. The program is designed to be accessible, and beneficial, to all audiences, from backyard gardeners to professional horticulturists and leading industry suppliers. In October 2022 we officially launched the program with the Hon Minister Matt Kean and high-profile industry experts. Here, we provide an update on the initiative since its launch including: 1) The Gardening Responsibly website and research portal, 2) media presence and engagement, 3) collaboration and partnerships and 4) our next steps. We call on others to join us in promoting best practice to protect our environment from potential threats. With your help we can protect our environment for generations to come.

Keywords: Risk Assessment, Prevention, Environment, Ornamental plants, Decision support