

## Tend Nursery Plants



Learning Guide

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Student name:.....

Student number:.....



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Tend Nursery Plants*. You might need to be able to tend plants in wholesale or retail nursery work or when doing revegetation or landscaping work. This could be when you are working for your council, doing ranger work or when managing your own country. Training should be completed on the job in a plant nursery over an extended period of time.

In this learning guide the essential daily tasks of tending plants in a nursery are covered. These include nursery hygiene, watering, fertilising, weeding, pruning and keeping records.

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

To complete this training you will need the following:

1. Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
2. Safety gear including first aid kit and water.
3. Access to a nursery or shade house.
4. Hand tools such as secateurs, spades, trowels and brooms.
5. Supplies such as bleach, fertilisers and herbicides.

## ASSIGNMENTS

There are three assignments you will need to complete.

Some of these assignments may go towards your final assessment.

Section	Assignment	Competent (C) Not yet competent (NYC)	Date Achieved
<b>Getting Prepared</b>	Assignment 1. Project Risk Assessment		
<b>Tending Nursery Plants</b>	Assignment 2. Irrigation Check		
<b>Finishing Up</b>	Assignment 3. Maintenance Schedule		



*It is recommended you do Undertake Propagation Activities and Pot Up Plants before doing Tend Nursery Plants.*

## 1A. COLLECTING INFORMATION

Information about nursery work can be obtained from many sources. There are some excellent books available that will help you (see References on page 21).

There is also information available online.

1. Nursery and Garden Industry Australia has lots of resources including useful publications and a link to the Nursery and Garden Industry Northern Territory.

 [www.ngia.com.au](http://www.ngia.com.au)


2. Information specific to horticulture in the NT can be found at the Northern Territory Horticultural Association.

 [www.ntha.com.au](http://www.ntha.com.au)

3. Horticulture Australia Ltd has Australia wide links, including information about research in the industry.

 [www.horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au)

4. For Australia wide information and resources on propagating native plants try the Greening Australia web site.

 [www.greeningaustralia.org.au](http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au)

## 1B. TENDING PLANTS SAFELY

There are some dangers associated with propagating plants. It is important that you be aware of potential dangers so you can avoid getting injured or sick.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will help protect you from serious injury, but no amount of PPE will protect you from bad workplace actions. Always follow workplace guidelines and your trainer's directions.

Some of the things you can do to keep yourself safe include:

1. Wear thick gardening or rubber gloves.
2. Wear appropriate clothes for outdoors and in wet weather wear waterproof clothing (nursery workers often work in cramped, hot, humid conditions and contact with plants can lead to dermatitis or skin lesions – make sure you cover up).
3. Wear protective footwear at all times, in some situations you may need rubber boots.
4. Keep safe distances away from other workers around hand tools.
5. Learn how to maintain and use hand tools correctly to avoid injury – always use the right tool for the job.
6. Always lift heavy objects correctly to avoid injuring your back – see Resource 1 for correct lifting procedures.
7. Know where your first aid kit is stored and make sure someone has a first aid certificate.
8. Nurseries are often hot and humid places – it is important to keep hydrated with plenty of fresh water.



## RISKS WHEN HANDLING POTTING MIXES

The handling of potting mixes requires special care to protect yourself from getting sick.

Some potting mixes contain a harmful bacteria called Legionella. The bacteria can cause Legionellosis, a type of pneumonia (this is not Legionnaires disease which is caused by a different Legionella bacteria found in air conditioner cooling towers).

To reduce the risk of infection when handling potting mixes follow these recommendations:

1. Handle all mixes with care to avoid breathing in dust.
2. Moisten the mix to avoid creating dust.
3. Wear suitable PPE to avoid contact with skin and eyes – gloves, dust mask, protective eyewear.
4. Avoid transferring the potting mix from hand to mouth – wash your hands before smoking, eating or drinking, even if you wore gloves.
5. Wash work clothes regularly.
6. Clean work area by wet-sweeping or vacuuming.
7. Seal any opened bags or containers after use and store in a cool location.

## SAFE USE OF CHEMICALS

The use of chemicals (such as fertilisers, fungicides and herbicides) when working in a nursery requires some extra special precautions.

**Keep all chemicals locked in an appropriate chemical cabinet. Only people with the right training should use chemicals.**

The following PPE should be considered when using chemicals.

1. PVC or chemical resistant gloves.
2. Goggles or protective glasses – protect your eyes as they easily absorb chemicals (a full face shield is needed for mixing some concentrated chemicals).
3. Dust mask or respirator – prevents the inhalation of dangerous chemicals.
4. Cotton hat – protects the head from chemicals and can be washed clean after each use.
5. Rubber boots – prevents spray getting onto your feet - the overalls should cover the outside of the boots so drips don't run down the inside of the boot.
6. Cotton overalls – suitable for general chemical work and will protect work clothes underneath – wash after each use or use disposable overalls.
8. PVC apron – used to protect clothing when mixing concentrated chemicals (a PVC suit may be necessary for some dangerous chemicals).



*Legionella bacteria infects the lungs when breathed in. Symptoms of Legionella infection include: fever, dry cough, breathlessness and chest pain. Other things in the potting mix can also cause lung irritation, asthma, hay fever, inflamed nose and throat – even more reason to be careful.*





# 1 – GETTING PREPARED

Before you begin, use this checklist to confirm you have followed good safety procedures and have all the right resources.

SAFETY CHECKLIST ACTIVITY		✓
Long trousers, shirt and boots		
Hat and gloves		
Sunscreen, insect repellent and sunglasses		
Dust mask		
Additional PPE as needed		
Water		
First aid kit		



### 1C. TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Using the correct tools will make propagation easier and will help to keep you free from injury.

Tick off the items you think you will need for your propagation activity.

ACTIVITY		✓
Buckets		
Bleach		
Methylated spirits		
Broom		
Secateurs		
Knife		
Wheelbarrow		
Plant trolley		
Shovels and spades		
Trowel		
Watering can		
Hoses		
Fertiliser		
Herbicides		
Spray unit		
Rubbish bins		