

Most WeedWise Nursery Award goes to Ngaruawahia nursery



Dr Doug Wright, Chair of Environment Waikato's North Zone Biosecurity Committee, presents the award to Julia and Wayne Bennett.

Forest Flora, the native plant nursery run by Wayne Bennett and his daughter Julia, is the winner of the 2009 Most Weedwise Nursery Award for New Zealand.

The award was presented to Wayne and Julia by Dr Doug Wright, Chair of Environment Waikato's North Zone Biosecurity Committee. Awards are presented annually in both New Zealand and Australia to celebrate nurseries that sell only 'environmentally-friendly' plants that are unlikely to invade and damage natural areas.

Nurseries nominated for the award must not sell plants likely to cause problems in native bush areas because their seeds are carried there by birds, or if they get 'dumped' on roadsides or in reserves by people tidying up their gardens. Other important criteria include the correct labelling of plants, and efforts by the nursery to educate customers and others about the possible impact of invasive plant species on the environment.

Forest Flora (www.forestflora.co.nz) specialises in helping and supporting restoration of natural areas in the Waikato. The nursery only sells native species, and specialises in eco-sourced plants – plants of known provenance. In their catalogue they record the locality the seed was collected as well as the number of individual plants from which seed was taken, to ensure the preservation of natural diversity.

The awards are organised by the Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS: <http://www.caws.org.au/index.php>), represented in New Zealand by the NZ Plant Protection Society (www.nzpps.org). The next Australasian Weeds Conference, which is organised by CAWS, will be held in Christchurch in September 2010 (www.17awc.org).