

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**17 May 2018**

## **Calling all creative gardeners!**

### **QLD Garden Expo competition reminds Queenslanders to BYO bag from 1 July**

With Queenslanders currently estimated to use over 1 billion single-use, lightweight plastic bags per year — most of which end up in landfill and the balance in our natural environment — it's great news that the plastic shopping bag as we know it, will be no more from 1 July this year.

Given the Queensland Garden Expo will open its gates within days of the ban being enforced, event organisers have decided to put the spotlight firmly on reusable bags of any kind by launching their inaugural 'Garden in a Bag' competition at this year's event being hosted at the Nambour Showgrounds from 13-15 July.

Event Manager Marion Beazley said the Expo would provide a great opportunity to educate and inform the over 40,000 visitors who attend on the importance of respecting the ban as well as ensuring the over 360 exhibitors all adhered to the new guidelines as well.

"For many of the smaller exhibitors and wholesalers the Expo will be their first public event after the ban is introduced so we are taking whatever measures we can to get the word out," Ms Beazley said.

"This competition is just one mechanism to create awareness of the ban. It's all about celebrating 'good' bags and we anticipate the mini-garden entries will range from reusable shopping bags to shopping baskets, handbags and every kind of bag imaginable," Ms Beazley said.

"We have learned over the years that gardeners are incredibly creative people and this challenge will enable participants to come up with something really unique within one of four categories."

The categories are a vegetable and/or herb garden; a flowering annuals garden; a succulent and/or cacti garden and the 12 years old and younger category.

"We hope this competition will get people talking in the lead-up to the Expo and remind attendees of the importance of bringing their own bags. We already have schools and community groups who have accepted the challenge and we hope this talking point will provide teachers and community leaders with an opportunity to share the importance of this change in legislation for our environment."

It is estimated around 16 million plastic bags end up in the environment in Queensland every year and those which end up in the waterways have a significant impact on wildlife like turtles and sea birds which can swallow or get tangled up in the bags.

"We really commend this move by the state government and are excited to host one of the first major events in the region which will be free of single-use plastic bags," Ms Beazley said.

"Of all the people, gardeners are probably one of the most informed audiences about the impact of pollution on our natural environment however we understand it will take some training to remind people to bring their own bags. This competition provides a talking point while delivering a range of creative and fun micro-gardens for our visitors to see at the Nambour Show Grounds during the event."

All who enter will receive a free pass to attend the Expo and winning entries will receive \$100 in prize money, or \$75 for the 12 years old and under category. The bags should be no bigger than 45cm x 45cm in size and will be displayed throughout the showgrounds during the event.

Entries close on 29 June 2018. To find out more, please visit the 'What's On' section at [www.qldgardenexpo.com.au](http://www.qldgardenexpo.com.au).

#### **Fast facts — Queensland Garden Expo**

- Three-day event
- 40,000-plus attendees
- 360-plus exhibitors and displays including 55 nurseries
- 120-plus free lectures and demonstrations
- Eight speaker stages

// Ends.

**Media contact**

Maya Gurry, Fresh PR & Marketing M: 0410 109 102 E: maya@freshprm.com.au

**More details**

Where:	Nambour Showgrounds, Coronation Avenue, Nambour on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast.
When:	Friday, 13 July to Sunday, 15 July 2018.
Opening times:	Gates open 8:00am daily. Gates close 5:00pm Friday and Saturday, 4:00pm Sunday.
Disability access:	The showground offers excellent facilities for wheelchair visitors with on-site disabled parking, easy access and ground level exhibits along with disabled toilet facilities. Guide dogs are welcome.
Tickets:	Adult entry – \$20. Aged concession* – \$18. Children 15 years and under – Free. Groups of 10 or more – \$18 each. Two-day weekend pass (Saturday and Sunday) – \$30. Three-day pass – \$45. *Concession will be given to Pensioner Concession Card, Queensland Senior Card, Disability Card & Queensland Carer Card holders only.

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