

Development of an Integrated Orchard Management guide for the Australian macadamia industry

J. Bright¹, S. Alt² and R. Commens³

¹NSW Department of Primary Industries; ²Givesoilachance; ³Australian Macadamia Society
jeremy.bright@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Prior to the development of the Integrated Orchard Management (IOM) guide, there was confusion regarding a number of issues. Growers would describe their orchards in terms of age and tree height, production yields and ground cover. These descriptors would vary dramatically. Orchard management practices also varied in description. There was no common language throughout the industry.

The IOM guide introduced the three pillars of production to the industry, comprising of canopy, orchard floor and drainage. It put forward the idea that modifying one of the pillars would have a positive/negative affect on the other two pillars. The guide also introduced the concept of orchard stages and within this the stages of each of the three pillars. The 5 stages provided industry with easy descriptors of how an orchard is perceived. The IOM guide also introduced the idea of “Red Flags” which are the obvious signs of a problem within the orchard. Through identifying the red flags growers could then address the issues using the guide toolkit to implement appropriate practices.

The IOM guide has brought together over 30 years of canopy, orchard floor and drainage research into one publication. Previously this information was scattered through factsheets and research publications, but now it is accessible in the guide.

The industry has embraced the guide which has developed a common language. It has brought about a maturity for the Australian macadamia industry and has allowed growers to be able to select pathways to rectify the red flag issues they had, or at least develop a plan to remedy the situation. The presentation will cover the key concepts introduced in the Integrated Orchard Management guide, including red flag issues, the toolkits and practical outcomes through IOM case studies.