

MEDIA MASTERCLASS

facebooking

with Matt Carroll

facebook®

Why Facebook: It allows the immediate sharing of images, videos, audio, website links and written text and offers a way to communicate with fans, and build a following.

How it works: Friends follow your profile and fans follow your page. They can then engage with you and other like-minded people associated with your brand. The benefits are reciprocal. Fans help to alert you to their interests, via their posts to your wall. They help extend your reach and thus expose your brand to their friends when they interact with your page.

Privacy: Work on the principle that EVERYONE sees everything on social media. Check facebook.com/help/privacy.

Setup: Set up what's called a page specifically for your business or organisation, as distinct from a profile, which is only for personal use. It's probably good to have both. A personal or profile account allows you to learn about Facebook, how it works and understand what content appeals. If you have Facebook "friends" they will be handy early "likers" of your business page and help get it going. More at facebook.com/pages

Look like you mean business: The image associated with your page (your avatar) needs to be sized correctly (180 x 180 pixels is best). Each page contains what's called a cover photo. This can be adjusted from a photo/image, or custom-designed to 851 x 315 pixels. There are strict rules relating to these images and they cannot contain any purchase or contact information or a call to action.

Top tips:

- Share plenty of photos and videos. They are engaging and most likely to be "liked", "commented" on and "shared" by friends and fans.
- Keep posts short, post regularly and share relevant posts from other pages to maintain momentum.



Post plenty of photos to engage viewers.

- Link your Facebook page to interesting stories on your website.
- Take a multi-platform approach. Add a link button to connect your Facebook page, with your website and all other digital correspondence such as e-newsletters and email signature.
- Create a custom URL for your page (eg. facebook.com/HMAAustralia) by clicking on edit page and then click update info. This URL is easier to find in the printed world.
- Familiarise yourself with the rules of Facebook. These relate to the running of competitions, images and content. A breach can result in your page being removed without warning.

Frequently asked questions:

Why would a HMA member want a Facebook page? It is a great way to speak directly to your fans/followers and see what interests them. It can also generate traffic to your website.

Why set up a business page? If there is any commercial interest in your page you must set up a "page", which allows people to

follow you by "liking" your page. This means that you are not sharing personal posts with the public.

Do you need a plan/strategy for your business page? You need start-up content (including logos/cover images). Your first few weeks will be quiet, allowing you to learn as you go.

How do you start? "Like" pages similar to your own as these will give you an idea about content that's most engaging and popular. Post images of topics that you've discussed in your articles or radio shows.

Why is the HMAA Facebook site relevant? It's a great spot to see what is happening in the horticultural media. By liking the HMA Australia page you will see relevant posts on your newsfeed such as event invitations.

Can people post items and pictures on HMAA Facebook? Simply visit the HMA Australia page - facebook.com/HMAAustralia and insert your post.

Further information: Online resources - facebook.com/business



Comment on posts to encourage discussions.

Handy terms

Like: To like a page means that you want to follow that page and see its posts (for example to "like" HMA Australia's page). To like a post/photo/video means simply that you like it. Your friends will also see that you like it, hence the multiplying effect.

Comment: You can comment on posts/photos/videos and become engaged in discussions (or threads) beneath them. You will be notified as others also comment on the post.

Share: Is to copy a post found from another's wall onto your own, hence sharing it with followers. It is OK to share content and great to be shared (providing you are not downloading an image and re-posting it as your own). Sharing posts removes the pressure of posting original content. When people share your posts, it broadens your audience and can be a great way to reach new followers.

Timeline: Is relatively new for Facebook. It places your posts on a virtual timeline where important dates can be added. These can predate the establishment of your account (for example: Company founded 1920).

Matt administers the NGIA's *Improve your Plant/Life Balance page* (facebook.com/plantlifebalance) as well as his *Hortiman page* (facebook.com/hortiman). Send Facebook questions to: matthew@hortiman.com or to HMA Australia page facebook.com/HMAAustralia