

The DOOR Manual for Plant Nurseries

Reprint – information current in 1996



Let's **DOOR** Our Own Research
The DOOR way to practical solutions

REPRINT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ!

For updated information please call 13 25 23 or visit the website www.deedi.qld.gov.au

This publication has been reprinted as a digital book without any changes to the content published in 1996. We advise readers to take particular note of the areas most likely to be out-of-date and so requiring further research:

- Contacts—many of the contact details may have changed and there could be several new contacts available. The industry organisation may be able to assist you to find the information or services you require.
- Organisation names—most government agencies referred to in this publication have had name changes. Contact the Business Information Centre on 13 25 23 or the industry organisation to find out the current name and contact details for these agencies.
- Additional information—many other sources of information are now available. Contact an agronomist, Business Information Centre on 13 25 23 or the industry organisation for other suggested reading.

Even with these limitations we believe this information kit provides important and valuable information for intending and existing growers.

This publication was last revised in 1996. The information is not current and the accuracy of the information cannot be guaranteed by the State of Queensland.

This information has been made available to assist users involved in the nursery and garden industry wishing to conduct their own research. This information is not to be used or relied upon by users for any purpose which may expose the user or any other person to loss or damage. Users should conduct their own inquiries and rely on their own independent professional advice.

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Queensland Government

**DO-OUR-OWN-
RESEARCH:
HOW IT WORKS**

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2.1

INTRODUCTION

DOOR promotes a major move away from the old way of providing research information, away from its dependency on externally generated research, to a new way of self-reliance with industry generating its own research information.

This new way of research empowers nursery operators to conduct research that is relevant and self-generated. Operators will own the research that they use and so are more likely to adopt any solutions that are generated.

Slow adoption rates of some government-generated research will no longer pervade the industry as other operators will quickly see the value of information that has welled up out of their own environment.

2.2

CONSULTANCY INVOLVEMENT

Each DOOR experiment requires about 10 to 15 hours of consultancy support on a one-to-one basis. The preferred relationship between the operator and the consultant is that of equal partners with a common goal of resolving an issue.

This relationship is a stark contrast to the way horticultural research was conducted in the past. Research was previously conducted through a teacher-learner relationship in which knowledge was passed in one direction only. The consultant often controlled the amount of information passed on to the operator.

DOOR emphasises skill development in the operator without detracting from the supportive role of the consultant, through partnership and co-development of both participants.

The operator and the consultant are interdependent. Consequently, operators need to be familiar with the consultants' role within the DOOR cycle so that they can be more involved in the process. Although the consultant and the operator may work separately at some stages, they still communicate fully on the process.

2.3

THE DOOR IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

The DOOR implementation cycle (see figure opposite on page 8) starts with the recognition of a problem or opportunity. To find a solution or exploit that opportunity, the operator needs to undertake a number of activities as progressive steps.

Some of these activities can be the operator's responsibility: identifying the problem or opportunity, gathering information, providing resources, implementing the trial, collecting data, validating recommendations. Other activities may be carried out by the DOOR consultant: designing experiments, analysing and interpreting data. Together, the operator and the consultant can carry out the remaining tasks: clarifying the issue and selecting keywords, evaluating and making decisions, calculating cost-benefits, and formulating recommendations.

The figure suggests how the responsibility for each activity should be allocated.

The manual is divided up into chapters that deal in order with the activities identified in the implementation cycle. The cycle diagram is repeated at the beginning of each chapter, indicating which steps of the cycle are being dealt with.

2.3.1

ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH ROUTES

The steps in the figure reflect the preferred research process. As the figure shows, there are alternative paths according to the particular situation. In most cases, evaluation and decisions would lead on to formulating the experimental design, but in some cases enough information may emerge that allows the operator to move directly to the recommendation stage.

Alternatively, evaluation and decisions may indicate that the issue is too complex, risky or costly for a single operator or group. In this case, the issue is referred to the local industry technical committee for attention by the relevant institutions as possible publicly funded projects.

2.4

GROUP-BASED RESEARCH

Qualified DOOR operators with common interests may wish to collaborate on their research in order to make the most of the benefits of the DOOR process. A group approach would be particularly appropriate where several operators have a similar research interest which need only slight modifications to meet their specific needs.

A group-based consultancy would also significantly reduce the cost to the individual operator. Group activities like this also enhance communication and information-sharing within the industry.

2.5

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND DOOR

DOOR is a collaborative process among trained operators and skilled professionals who work and learn together to solve specific nursery problems or explore opportunities.

The philosophy behind DOOR is the Participative Action Management (PAM) model. For a full and detailed discussion of PAM and its role as the basis for DOOR, the reader is strongly urged to read Professor Shankariah Chamala's paper that appears in appendix 3 at the end of this manual.