

growth technology



**INNOVATORS
IN HORTICULTURE**

**TOTAL GROWTH
SOLUTIONS**

NEWS

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Cocopeat to be made locally

We will soon be manufacturing locally a versatile, favourably priced growing medium, purpose designed to suit various air porosity and water holding requirements.

The medium, Cocopeat, will be manufactured at our O'Connor premises using a specially designed machine capable of producing various consistencies of the medium at the touch of a button. This allows us to program a mix to suit exactly what the plant needs.

Regarded as the successor to peat, Cocopeat is made of coconut fibre, which our machine converts into the required medium. Thus for seedlings it will produce a medium with a good water holding capacity, while for orchids it will fashion a medium with a high degree of air porosity.

Already widely employed as a soil substitute, Cocopeat is also used for blending with soils.

Its increasing use is the result of a number of factors. Because of ecological concerns peat is becoming more costly and difficult to obtain.

It also offers a number of benefits when

compared to other commonly used peat substitutes. Spun rock fibre, which is used by some tomato growers, is expensive and has problems related to the disposal of the medium. Sawdust compacts too easily and has inferior water holding properties. Perlite and vermiculite are pricey and also have water holding disadvantages.

Cocopeat can be used more than once, is inexpensive and because it is organic, can be easily disposed of.

The product fits in perfectly with our overall philosophy of supplying products that ensure your plants are grown in the right medium and are fed the right diet.

The raw material for Cocopeat comes in hard blocks. Our machine hydrates this material in about two seconds, pumping out products with many different properties.

We will be able to supply the product as bricks, bagged, or in specialty mixes.

Cocopeat is an extra arm to our business and our range will expand to provide special mixes for commercial plants including roses, carnations and vegetables like cucumbers and capsicums.



Our own Natalie Rijavec potting with Cocopeat.

Cocopeat orchid nuggets are now available from Ezigro Wondawest, corner of Lord and Marshall Rd, West Swan. Phone 9274 5150.

Moore River plans to feed growing demand

Plans for the establishment of our new factory at Moore River have reached an advanced stage.

The new factory will concentrate on bulk liquid fertiliser manufacture and is designed to serve what is destined to be the heart of future horticultural development in WA.

Demand for our bulk liquid fertiliser in the Guilderton-Lancelin area has escalated markedly as more and more major vegetable growers establish there.

We have reached the stage where we believe that to best meet the growing demand from existing and future growers we must establish a manufacturing facility at Moore River.

In addition to taking the pressure off our factory in O'Connor, the new plant will significantly increase our overall output of liquid fertilisers, giving us the capability to better supply vegetable and olive growers. It will also allow us to start addressing the needs of vineyards.



The Moore River factory will further expand our manufacture of bulk liquid fertilisers.

Are you missing this vital link?

Keeping a constant check on your leaf tissue is critical to ensuring optimal production. And at this time of the year it is as important to retest your water.

In line with our philosophy of supplying total nutrient solutions specially formulated to suit your own conditions, we are committed to regularly analysing your leaf tissue and the water you use. These tests enable us to adjust your nutrient formula in order to ensure the best possible results. As a customer you will benefit from this service which comes with a small fee.

They also help us to supply you exactly what your plants require and nothing more.

If you are near a wetland, we will even monitor that wetland to ensure that nutrients are not escaping into the wetland where such run-off can expose you to possible problems with

environmental authorities.

To have your leaf tissue analysed professionally, collect the youngest fully-matured leaves, just enough to fill a paper sandwich bag - not a plastic bag - and get it into us as quickly as possible.

We will arrange for the leaves to be properly washed to remove all the dust. They are then put into an oven for drying and dissolved down to powder, going through a machine that measures minerals.

Growth Technology will interpret the data for you and tell you exactly where your plants are at; clearly outlining their nutritional status.

We also offer a similar service on water balance. Simply bring a sample of your water to us in a 250ml clean plastic bottle. It's important to know the quality of your water supply ... it helps your product grow better.



Laboratory testing of leaf tissue.

Advice born of hands on experience

Its past role as WA's first large scale hydroponic tomato producer has given Growth Technology a unique advantage as a supplier of specially tailored nutrient packages to commercial growers of vegetables and other products.

Says managing director, Carl Barry, "when we started our hydroponic tomato growing operation there was little local expertise to call on. We had to learn by our own mistakes. This included a great deal of experimentation with nutrients before we eventually arrived at the most cost effective nutritional mix for growing our cherry tomatoes.

"Soon we found other pioneering tomato growers approaching us to supply them with the nutrient formulas which we had developed. This then was the beginning of Growth Technology's current role as a leading supplier to horticulture of nutrients and related products.

"Today, while we are no longer involved in growing tomatoes, our understanding of grower needs and problems sees us often being called on to find solutions to challenges faced by commercial growers. These include specific formulas designed to minimise nutrient costs and advice on growing alternative crops," he said.

If you are looking to grow additional crops or would like to further improve efficiency, please give us a call.

Introducing gardeners to the soilless revolution

The coming Melbourne Flower Show will see us launching the coming revolution in the growing of potted patio plants.

At the show we will be introducing our new range of soilless gardening nutrient products. With this 21st century solution the gardener will be given all the nutrients a potted plant needs in one bottle.

When used with our Cocopeat growing medium, the gardener will no longer be lost in a sea of confusion in deciding on which specific nutrients are required to complement the soil in the pot.

In effect we are giving gardeners the same proven products used so successfully by commercial growers throughout WA. They will be getting a quick, simple, clean and effective potted gardening method.

Initially, we will be marketing six different soilless gardening products. They are an orchid bloom formula, an orchid



Potted gardening is in for a revolution.

growth formula, a nutrient product for roses, a general purpose grow formula, a bloom booster and a low phosphorous mix for native plants.

The products will feature high impact packaging giving them a strong merchandising presence on your retail shelves. The Cocopeat growing medium will be supplied in 30litre bags.

Our business is growing

A small tin shed behind an old bakery building in South Fremantle was the humble beginning in 1988 for the start of Growth Technology, now a world-wide venture that manufactures and distributes nutrients on three continents.

Giles Gunstone and Carl Barry had an interest in hydroponics. The latter was a school teacher with a degree in biology and an interest in growing vegetables and greenhouses, while Giles also enjoyed experimenting with vegetables and nutrients. They launched the first large scale hydroponic tomato growing operation in WA, but both men realised that being a grower was hard work.

"We found that mixing chemicals together to help things grow was a lot easier," says Carl.

Giles first started the company in 1984 when he couldn't find any suitable or successful nutrients to help in his hobby of growing vegetables.

"So he mixed his own ingredients up," says Carl. "Before long other growers

were asking if they could have some. Since then we've virtually taken the commercial formulation and tailored it to the hobby grower."

The company expanded to the United Kingdom in 1992 when Giles returned to his English home where he now runs Growth Technology UK, with the huge European market and 50 million gardeners at his doorstep. "We now have Australian-wide distribution and also to the UK and the United States," says Carl.

"Most of our competitors in Australia tend to be distributors only; they buy products overseas, but we actually make our own nutrients. Products developed in WA are also made under licence in the UK and USA.

"In 1992 we were pretty proud of ourselves, but that's nothing compared to where we are today. We now have more than a dozen products, most of which are mixed and produced on-site in O'Connor.

"The development of our propagating formula, Clonex, was the one event which gained us widespread acceptance and



Unlike others we manufacture locally at our O'Connor factory.

catapulted us to a new level as a major manufacturer.

"What we're dealing with in many parts of Australia is a place with poor soil, not very good water and expensive labour," says Carl. "If you stop growing products outdoors, bring it into greenhouses and put it into hydroponic systems, those factors don't matter any more. You can clean the water up, the greenhouses provide year-round protection from the weather, and you get 12 months of production."

Clonex a pioneer's path

Every success story deserves a little luck ... and the people behind Growth Technology certainly admit that they've had their share.

Co-founder and company partner Giles Gunstone admits that a little luck a few years back helped enormously in the development of the Clonex rooting hormone, which is a leading high-performance plant-rooting compound.

At the time propagating products were talc based. Giles and co-founder Carl Barry were convinced that a gel based product would prove superior in that it would prevent the entry of air

into the cutting. This was a problem that limited the effectiveness of existing talc based products.

Initially, the development of Clonex was done with hundreds of cuttings, but the fledgling company's research methods were still being trialled. "We were just two guys in a little factory and there was an element of a lucky accident in the birth of Clonex," recalls Giles. "I will remember the batch

of cuttings that was massively more developed than all the

other batches, which told us that we had the mix of hormones and nutrients about right."

Carl realised they were onto a winner when the chance addition of another chemical magically changed what was an unattractive opaque purplish gel into a clear gel which he knew would appeal to the market. Today this purple gel is familiar to growers throughout Australia and in several other countries.



Expanding product line

The Clonex name will in future not only stand for the world's leading propagating gel.

Plans are well advanced to soon introduce Clonex rooting hormones in powder and liquid form. Just watch this space!

Re-branding gets approval

Growth Technology is pleased to report that the recent “re-branding exercise” has been a huge success.

As the company's range of products grew significantly, each new packaging hit the market with a different look ... and that needed changing.

We needed a common theme, a family look to bring all our products together. We decided on a new look for the company and its expanding range of products and we're delighted that the branding has been really well received by you, our customers.

The re-branding exercise resulted from considerable research and planning, with a



Some of our rebranded retail products.

clear visual interpretation of the product range in a way that enables the consumer and GT staff to grow awareness of the range and also see direct application of products to their needs.

Liz more than our voice



You may have spoken to her on the phone but Liz is a lot more than the voice of Growth Technology.

As our customer relations person, Liz Jonczyk is always there to address your administrative queries. Liz has been part of our team for the past four years.

From little things...

It all started when envious visitors to Geranium World wanted to know how they could get their hands on the formula that kept the nursery's Pelargoniums and Geraniums in full bloom year round.

It was at that stage that owners, Gaye and Alan McCabe decided that it would be a good idea to bottle and sell through the nursery the nutrient formula developed in close association with Growth Technology.

Since then the single bottle formula, known as GeraniYum, has attracted such widespread interest that Gaye and Alan have taken the next step and are now wholesaling the formula to other Garden Centres.

Gaye and Alan started Geranium World near Mandurah from scratch in 1995. Through a combination of trial and error and some good advice from Carl Barry they eventually created the facilities and growing conditions that have seen them consistently producing healthy Pelargoniums and Geraniums with year-round blooms.

Along the way there were many obstacles to overcome. They found, for example, that Geraniums that had been



Alan and Gaye tending to their Geraniums.

mollycoddled often did not perform well in the end user's garden. In order to keep them as hardy as possible they do not use growth regulators nor are they grown in climate controlled conditions. The Geraniums are, however, grown under cover in order to keep the flowers looking good and to avoid devastation by parrots. The Pelargoniums are all grown in the open air with overhead watering.

In choosing to specialise in Pelargoniums and Geraniums, Gaye and Alan seem to have hit on the plants of

the future. In today's world, people are looking for drought tolerant plants that can also produce constant blooms year after year. Geraniums are not heavy feeders, have excellent drought resistance and if fed the right formula, will bloom all year round. These properties are being recognised by a number of local authorities. In Melbourne, for example, annuals have been replaced by Geraniums in some public areas.

Certainly, the world of Pelargoniums and Geraniums has changed a lot since granny grew those familiar pink ones in the backyard. Today there are many colours and varieties with exciting new hybrids coming onto the market regularly.



The amazing show of colour at the pioneering Geranium World nursery.