

# growth technology



## Innovations in Horticulture

# NEWS

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# It's propagation time

**It's that time of the year when many of us take cuttings and start propagating a seemingly endless variety of plants.**

And today, most of us appreciate that it is necessary to use a plant rooting compound that will guard against the inevitable stress associated with propagation and transplant shock, and promote rapid root development.

Clonex is widely regarded as the answer when it comes to plant propagation. A high performance plant rooting compound, it incorporates hormones, vitamins, nutrients, wetting agents and fungicides in a bright, translucent gel. Developed for commercial and hobby growers, it is a formulation which promotes profuse root growth on cuttings from the moment they are taken and well into the vegetative cycle.

However, it not only initiates root development but also nourishes young plants with its full profile of mineral nutrients.

The gel formula minimises waste and remains in constant contact with the cutting.

Clonex instantly seals cut tissue, eliminating the risk of infection or embolism. Its ability to promote rapid root development also helps protect the cutting against fungus and disease.

Clonex Purple Gel is designed for cuttings classified as medium density woods. Green Gel and Red Gel are formulated for especially soft or hard woods respectively.



## Research project could boost olive yields

It has been said that when a comprehensive history of olive farming in WA is written, Adolfo Levin will surely rate a mention in its pages.

For not only has he already played a significant role in helping the industry become more commercially viable, but he is currently involved in a co-operative research project aimed at further improving yields and saving costs.

Adolfo, who is Grove Manager of Fini Olives, was born in Argentina where he obtained his BA Biology degree.

Thereafter he was one of only 10 people on the entire continent to be chosen to undertake a Masters Degree in Ecology.

Shortly after completion of his Masters degree, Adolfo moved to a kibbutz in Israel where he focused on irrigation and pest control at stone fruit and avocado farms. From there it was a short step to becoming involved in world-renowned Israeli olive groves - a development which led to his PhD on the Verticillium Wilt Fungus, which has attacked groves in Europe and to a lesser extent in the

Eastern States. During this time he was fortunate to have as one of his advisors

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# Research project could boost olive yields

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Professor Shimon Lavell, one of the world's leading authorities on olives.

Under this expert influence and having experienced Israel's famed success in "making the desert bloom", Adolfo came to WA with impeccable credentials and a strong interest in implementing practices designed to improve on olive yields.

It is an interest which now sees Adolfo also involved in a research project with UWA, Growth Technology and Fini to clearly establish exactly what nutrients trees need to achieve optimal yields and minimise wastage in various soils. "Fertigation is the most expensive part of a grove and if you save on wastage it has a huge impact on profitability."

Looking at the current state of the WA olive industry, Adolfo says most local olive farmers have come to realise that olive trees cannot just be left to fend for themselves as was often the case in the past. "Today olive trees are not just peripheral. They have in many cases become the main crop.

"If they are to achieve their full potential it is critical that they are properly cared for, particularly in the first three or four years of life.

"For example, they should be properly watered, fed and trained and steps need to be taken to deepen the root system so that the trees can withstand the effects of tree shaking during harvesting.



**Adolfo - a man with olives in his blood**

"There are no miracles involved despite claims that are sometimes made by so-called experts.

"It's just a matter of getting the right advice and then following it."

Adolfo believes the local industry is fortunate to be structured in a manner that results in the vast proportion of olive oil production falling in the Extra Virgin category. "Because of its quality,

Australian olive oil is making small but important inroads into markets in the USA, Italy and Asia."

## The NGIWA show

The recent NGIWA exhibition was staged to provide a unique opportunity for buying customers to speak to and purchase direct from some of Perth's best nursery people.

2006 Green Expo, presented by NGIWA (Nursery & Garden Industry of WA) in Canning Vale, was aimed at garden centre operators, landscapers, garden maintenance operators, landscare

and catchment groups and other buyers of greenlife such as local government.

Many of the 30-plus exhibitors showed off new technologies designed to save time, water and money. Allied traders were also on hand to provide solutions to problems of many kinds. Also available for consultation were quarantine staff to discuss the interstate movement of plants, invasive weeds, etc.

**Introducing Sherice**  
Meet Sherice  
Brankstone, the voice  
you will hear when  
next you phone  
Growth Technology.



## Don't drop your guard

Regular usage can sometimes make us less careful when it comes to the use of dangerous chemicals.

This is a brief reminder to ensure that you always carefully follow safety instructions on the manufacturer's packaging whenever using dangerous chemicals. In most cases this means using gloves, protecting your eyes, preventing contact with the skin and taking extra precautions to keep such chemicals out of reach of children.

Always make sure that you know what to do should things go wrong. Remember, being able to act quickly is critical.

In particular you should be aware of the dangers posed by pH chemicals such as Potassium Hydroxide and Phosphoric Acid.

Another scheduled poison which should always be treated as dangerous is Hydrogen Peroxide, which is often used for sanitising hydroponic systems.

# A new Creative direction

Registered nurse, Belinda Duim, was certainly thrown off the deep end when her partner Grant Doyle died last year.

Grant left his Rockingham business to Belinda and their two children and as Belinda puts it, "The kids were too young to take over, so I had to learn very quickly how to run Creative Hydroponics."

Fortunately, she was able to call on the assistance of Russell Cox, a family friend who had previously worked in the business. Together, and with the remaining great staff at Creative they have continued to maintain their helpful advice and assistance to their customers in a happy and friendly environment.

They are now confidently expanding their business direction with new product lines. Signifying this new path, the business name has changed to Creative Grow Store. Today it is increasingly being recognised as the place to go for advice whether you want to grow a few tomatoes or find the best way of creating a constant environment to nurture your carnivorous plants.

Says Belinda, "Recently we advised a person on the best environment, nutrients and containers to grow buck wheat. Another client wanted to know all about growing hydroponic vegetables as he was going to live in Iceland. By using the Island's volcanic heat he will be able to keep the plants' environment warm using an indoor system.

"We are focussed on being a one-stop shop. If we don't have what you are after we are perfectly happy to source it for you.



A view of the shop floor



Belinda and Russell

"We also mail out small products to our country customers with larger items being sent with the freight company of their choice.

"We are increasing our service to orchid growers, providing a large choice of coco media and nutrients from the Focus range which is designed by Growth Technology and especially formulated for orchid growers.

"In the coming years, a large number of retirees and families who have downsized their back yards will find that it is quite easy to grow herbs, salads and wok vegetables with a few pots out on the balcony.



A display of Focus nutrients

"With lightweight soilless growing media it is no longer necessary to lug soil through the house. We stock all Growth Technology's Focus nutrients and its cocopeat medium."

## The way to more flowers and fruit

Even the best nutrient formulations can fall short of the amount of phosphorus and potassium needed to maximise flowering and fruit growth.

Our Ionic Bloom formulation is designed to provide the quantities of nutrients needed for plants to achieve their full potential. The benefit for you is an increased number of flowering sites, an increased weight and density of fruit and an increased quality of fruit and flowers.

The Ionic range, which also incorporates growth and vegetative formulations, combines minerals in an

easy-to-use, single-pack concentrate, containing all the elements crucial for the plant at various stages of its life cycle.

This process enables the precise delivery of balanced nutrients directly into the plant in a way not previously possible.

All Ionic nutrients are precision blends of nutrients bonded in the exact ratios required by plants and these remain in a highly stable form until they are taken up through the roots. They are fully buffered to stabilise the pH of the nutrient solution.



# Waste minimisation the key

When Ken Bogdanis decided to leave the retail vegetable world to become a green house grower there wasn't much information around on how to go about making such a venture profitable.

So he had to complement some pretty intense reading with advice from Carl Barry and from established growers who were prepared to give him the benefit of their experience.

Today, six years later, Ken's Tunnel Vision operation is a successful grower of cherry tomatoes and is currently looking at the possibilities offered by potted live herbs. He is already marketing basil in pots and could soon complement this with other herbs. In undertaking this project, Ken once again sought advice from Carl Barry who had himself been a herb grower. Together they came up with a nutrient package designed to ensure optimal efficiency.

But while herbs offer some potential, Ken is still firmly focussed on his bread-and-butter crop - cherry tomatoes. In this area he is constantly looking at ways of



**Ken with his cherry tomatoes**

making his operation more efficient. Recently he introduced truss cherry tomatoes to his greenhouse and he devotes a lot of time to monitoring the strength and run-off of nutrients in order to give a plant what it needs without incurring wastage. "With nutrient costs

representing a major portion of total production costs, even a small saving in wastage can have a significant impact on profits."

Ken's 750m<sup>2</sup> operation at Muchea is one of three arms of the Tunnel Vision Group.

## WAGGA flexes its muscles

The fledgling WA Greenhouse Growers Association (WAGGA) clearly displayed its growing influence with the recent staging of its second exhibition in Landsdale.

Some 26 exhibitors representing local, Eastern States and overseas suppliers signed up to display their products and services at Landsdale's Kingsway Olympic Sporting Complex. An hour was set aside for guest speakers to address professional growers and hobbyists who attended the event.

Members of the Association were in attendance to answer growers' queries about the benefits of joining WAGGA.

According to Harry Trandos, a member of the WAGGA committee and organiser of the exhibition, the Association had its beginnings a couple of years ago. At the time there had been separate and rather loose associations of vegetable, fruit and flower growers. The establishment of WAGGA brought these groups of growers together into a single, more organised association.

WAGGA, he said, came into being because of a desire among many greenhouse growers for an association



**Some of the exhibits at the WAGGA Landsdale exhibition**

that could effectively represent their interests and play an active role in helping the entire industry to lift its game.

WAGGA staged its 1st exhibition a year ago with 19 exhibitors.

The Association also plans to stage at least two workshops a year.

These will focus on areas such as nutrients and irrigation and will give growers the opportunity to obtain information and ask questions in relation to important areas of greenhouse growing.

Growers wanting more information on WAGGA can contact Harry Trandos on 0407 986 180.



**At the opening of the recent WAGGA exhibition in Landsdale are (L to R) Harry Trandos, organiser of the exhibition and member of the WAGGA committee, Paul Humble, President of WAGGA and Matthew Pollock, the Association's Vice President.**