

Big news!

Big news! The Van der Knaap Group will be presenting a new product at the GreenTech, which will be held in Amsterdam's RAI Exhibition Centre from 10 to 12 June. Are you intrigued? You'll find us at stand number 10.206.



Organic substrates

Specially for the professional organic horticulture sector Van der Knaap has developed four substrates that meet the requirements of and have been approved by BIO Austria.

The mixtures concerned are not only available in Austria, but also in other parts of Europe, including the Netherlands. One of the requirements of BIO Austria is that the substrates must be free of chemical fertilisers. Another is that they must contain a certain percentage of peat substitutes, and at most 65% peat.

The substrates consist entirely or partly of peat-substituting resources, such as compost certified by the independent Dutch organisation RHP. Our organic substrates are fertilised with a 100% organic fertiliser.

Applications

We have substrates for the following applications:

- Organic substrate for soil blocks
- 100% peat-free organic substrate for pot plants
- Organic substrate for pot plants and herbs
- Organic substrate for tray plants and seedlings

More information?

For more information on the Van der Knaap Group's organic



Approved by BIO Austria

substrates, please contact our Sales department at +31 (0)174-525050.

Customer focus

Propagation Cubes

Six years ago, Van der Knaap-Forteco started developing its coco-based Propagation Cubes. One of the reasons for doing this was that we were convinced that coco is a very suitable medium for propagation, another was the growing demand for such cubes from growers who were already using coco (slabs). The automated handling of coco cubes proved quite a challenge, because the machines are specifically designed for processing stone wool blocks. In the meantime, quite a few propagation companies have switched to using our Propagation Cubes. One of them is Brabant Plant.

Brabant Plant

Brabant Plant is a propagation company that produces greenhouse and outdoor vegetable plants and flowers in a total area of 12 ha. From its premises in Haarsteeg the company supplies its produce to customers in the Netherlands and other countries.

Brabant Plant's products are based on their customers' requirements, so they don't supply standard products. What they offer their customers is tailor-made in the broadest sense of the word: different types of products, plants grown in different substrates and in different propagation periods – you name it.

Propagation in coco

Paul Jochems of Brabant Plant explains why his company decided to switch to Propagation Cubes. "For several years we closely followed developments in the use of coco as a substrate for propagating greenhouse vegetable plants.

But until recently no really reliable, consistent product was available. However, the coco that's now available is of a quality that enables us to use and process it without major adjustments. The past year we have gained a lot of experience with the Propagation Cubes developed by Van der Knaap-Forteco. We organised various trials to find out whether our standard cultivation procedures would have to be adjusted and, if so, how."

The company's findings were positive. In terms of cultivation conditions, the differences between the substrates proved to be fairly small. "We did have certain expectations with respect to the coco substrate, for example that it would be more vegetative than stone wool." But that assumption proved to be wrong. "The basis for our end product, the plant, is not the substrate underneath it, but the actual plant itself. We must focus on our plants to determine what strategy we should use to

steer their development. You have to be able to control the moisture content in the pot to promote generative growth. And coco can be excellently controlled."

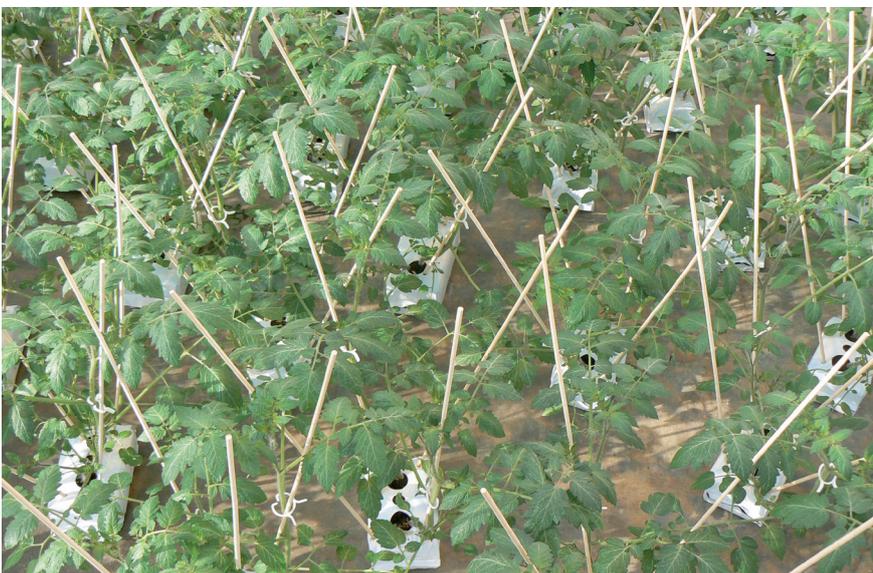
Adjustments

The automated processing of the Propagation Cubes did raise some questions at Brabant Plant. Paul Jochems explains: "The automated system we were using was based on stone wool for activities such as distributing the blocks, picking them up, etc. The coco cubes required a different automated processing system, but a few minor adjustments brought us close to the results we wanted." The process did not proceed entirely smoothly from the very start. "A disadvantage is that staking takes more time in the case of coco than it does with stone wool."

In the meantime the various aspects requiring improvement have been evaluated together with the propagators. One of those aspects is the removal of the covers at the end of the cultivation season. Paul Jochems: "Once the various improvements have been made, propagators will certainly be able to enjoy the benefits of coco, and more use will be made of coco pots for propagation." Bart 't Hoen of Forteco explains: "The discussed improvements will be made in the Propagation Cubes before the next propagation season. So we'll continue to optimise the product."

More information

For more information please contact Bart 't Hoen at bartthoen@vanderknaap.info.



Propagation Cubes

KOS 073

Knaap Orchid Substrate with bark

In 2009 the Van der Knaap Group started to develop an orchid substrate. Trials in the company's own testing facility 'de Kas' showed that the Knaap Orchid Substrate (KOS) is a very good alternative for the traditional bark mixture. Since then, a new KOS substrate has been developed: KOS 073.

KOS

The aim in developing the Knaap Orchid Substrate (KOS) was to obtain an alternative, bark-free substrate for the cultivation of orchids. Aspects that were tested during the various trials were the



Root system on KOS 073

effects of different substrates on the colour of the leaves, the root system, the number of flower stalks, etc. The tests we conducted with *Phalaenopsis* and other types of orchids in 'de Kas' yielded a lot of useful information on the plants' needs.

KOS 073

Besides in 'de Kas', the KOS substrates were also tested in practical trials carried out by various growers. The growers found that the KOS coco substrate dried quickly and called for a different irrigation strategy that was difficult to incorporate in their usual cultivation procedures. We therefore developed a new orchid substrate: KOS 073, which contains both coco and bark.

RHP Bark

Early this year, Van der Knaap started using a new resource: RHP Bark. RHP Bark is steamed bark of *Pinus Pinaster*. In determining the bark's dimensions we initially focused on the market's requirements and our own experiences in the cultivation of orchids.

Properties

We wanted the drying rate of the KOS 073 to be in line with that of existing substrates to enable it to be smoothly incorporated in growers' present cultivation procedures. The substrate must dry quickly enough, but at the same time the moisture must remain available for the plants for four days. The KOS bark concept meets the market's requirements, but the growers' needs and their cultivation conditions are decisive with respect to the substrate's ultimate composition, which can optionally be adjusted.

The bark provides the skeleton while the coco ensures the distribution of water, the nutrient buffer and the capillary action in the pot. With our own coco fractions we are able to meet our customers' irrigation requirements and determine the drying rate. The addition of coco makes the substrate controllable!

Further development

The substrate is currently being delivered to various growers. In consultation with them we will continue to develop it. We are also working hard on innovative solutions for the packaging and delivery of our KOS substrate.

More information

For more information on Van der Knaap's new orchid substrate, please contact our Sales department at +31 (0)174-525050.



Phalaenopsis

Responsibly Produced Peat

The Van der Knaap Group supports the Responsibly Produced Peat initiative: an independent European certification system for companies that produce peat in a responsible manner.

The annual European consumption of growing media is more than 30 million m³. Because of its specific properties, peat is an important resource for use in growing media; every year around 25 million m³ of peat is used. Peat producers, users and environmental organisations all work together because they find it important that the peat is produced in a transparent, demonstrably sound way. RPP is the outcome of cooperation between the European Peat And Growing Media Association EPAGMA, the International

This means:

- no peat is extracted from untouched natural peatlands with high ecological biodiversity;
- the best possible development is secured after peat production, with preference for restoration of the peat and biodiversity;
- a win-win situation for the environment and the peat industry by maximising peat extraction from already degraded peatlands.

In the meantime, more than 30 leading peat producers have agreed to use the RPP certification system. This they can only do if they can demonstrate that they conform to the RPP criteria.

The peat producers are inspected by an independent certification organisation. This year the certifica-



Peat is an important component for growing media.

Peat Society IPS, the German Association for the Garden Industry IVG and the Dutch Growing Media Producers organisation VPN.

What does RPP entail?

RPP-certified peat producers demonstrate that the peat they extract and/or produce conforms to the Principles & Criteria of RPP.

tion system will be tested at eight locations in Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. The first certificates are expected to be issued at the end of 2014.

More information

For more information go to www.responsiblyproducedpeat.org.

AGENDA 2014

GREENTECH

Tuesday 10 – Thursday 12 June

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

This year will see the first edition of the GreenTech in Amsterdam's RAI Exhibition Centre. The Van der Knaap Group will be there, in hall 10, stand 10.206.

CULTIVATE '14

Saturday 12 – Tuesday 15 July

Columbus, Ohio, US

This year the OFA Short Course will take place under the name of Cultivate '14. Van der Knaap will be attending it, at stand number 1311.

FRUIT FOCUS

Wednesday 23 July

Kent, Great Britain

This year we will be represented at the UK's Fruit Focus for the first time.

PLANTARIUM

Wednesday 27 -

Saturday 30 August

Hazerswoude-Dorp, the Netherlands

In August you'll find the Van der Knaap Group at the international arboricultural fair Plantarium.

AARDBEIENDEMODAG

Friday 5 September

St. Oedenrode, the Netherlands

We will once again be attending the Strawberry Day in St. Oedenrode.

AGRO EXPOALIMENTARIA

Tuesday 11 -

Friday 14 November

Irapuato, Mexico

This year you will find us in the Holland Pavilion at the Agro Expoalimentaria.

Would you like more information about topics in this newsletter?

Simply contact our Public Relations Department: tel. +31 (0)174 296606.