

Spring 2015 volume 9 no. 21

## Van der Knaap at IPM Essen

**From Tuesday 27 until Friday 30 January 2015 the IPM fair will be held in the German town of Essen. The Van der Knaap Group will be represented there again this year.**

### Van der Knaap Group

This year you will once again find



Stand Van der Knaap Group

us in hall 3, at stand number 3D18. At the stand we will be presenting our rooting products, such as paperpots and Fibre-Neth®, and our growing media, such as Forteco coco slabs and various substrates.

But we will also be presenting some new products, one of which is our new plant plug Obturo®. On page two of this newsletter you can read all about the first experiences with this plug. Our IPM stand wouldn't be complete without Fibre-Neth® Twin 3.0: an innovative plug that makes it easy for you to sort your Phalaenopsis during propagation and propagate plants separately. Read all about it on page three. Our representatives at the fair will also gladly provide

information on the various **peat-free substrates** in our range.

### Van der Knaap Retail

This year, Van der Knaap Retail will also be represented at the Van der Knaap Group's stand. The range of smart potting-soil products has been adjusted and given a makeover, with the focus on the strong products that are produced at our own production sites. Van der Knaap Retail also searches for tailor-made logistic solutions for its large customers.

We hope to meet you at our IPM stand!

## Growing in peat-free substrates

**The use of peat substrates is under pressure, leading to a growing demand for peat-free substrates. We already make a lot of use of raw materials other than peat in our potting-soil mixtures. Those alternative materials are coco products.**

Van der Knaap has many years' experience in the use of various coco products, which we produce and process ourselves at production sites all over the world. For many years now, this has enabled us to supply mixtures with a reduced peat content, and even peat-free mixtures.

The past two years we have done

a lot of research into peat-free substrates in our testing facility 'de Kas' (the Greenhouse). We have for example carried out trials using two different types of pot plants: Dracaena and pot roses. The trials showed that the peat-free substrates are very suitable for the tested types of plant. The main component in peat-free mixtures is coco. In actual fact, the results that can be obtained with a special basic fertiliser and an adjusted programme for further fertilisation are indeed even better than those obtained with peat mixtures.

The results of the trials led to four peat-free mixtures with different physical properties and

air contents that can be used for many different purposes. The



Trial using peat-free substrate

knowledge gained in 'de Kas' has been used to organise various practical trials at growers' premises. The results are promising.

The perfect plant plug

# Obturo® in practice

In June the Van der Knaap Group presented a new plant plug at the GreenTech: Obturo®. This plug can be adjusted to meet customer requirements. So Obturo® offers all the flexibility needed to perfect your cultivation process.

## Trials

In the meantime various trials have been carried out with Obturo® in our own testing facility 'de Kas'. Right now we are doing a trial with Anthurium that we organised together with RijnPlant, which is carrying out the same trial itself.



Anthurium grown in Obturo®

The trial focuses on two varieties: Red King (with large leaves) and Lady Love (small leaves). RijnPlant cut the cuttings in week 39. They were first propagated under plastic sheets and later under acrylic cloth. They were planted in week 51. The two trials are running parallel.



With Martin van Noort (l.) of RijnPlant

The results so far obtained are promising. Something that caught our attention during the trials is that the substrate in the Obturo® plugs shows little shrinkage. Obturo® also absorbs water very well, becoming uniformly moist. According to RijnPlant's Martin van Noort this is a major advantage: "Once we've covered our plants with plastic sheets we prefer to postpone further irrigation until the time when we remove the plastic. That's no problem with the Obturo® plugs." The roots develop well, penetrating the entire plug volume and adhering well to the plug. That's also a good thing, because it prevents the risk of the roots being damaged when the plants are spaced further apart and repotted. The above-ground development of the plants in both trials also looks good: the plants are very uniform and have an attractive natural gloss.

## Esperit

The Esperit Young Plants nursery (formerly Kwekerij de Amstel) has recently started to use Obturo® plugs. After a trial with fuchsias in September, plants are now also being propagated in Obturo® plugs, alongside paperpots and trays filled with loose substrate. Robin Theijssen explains why: "The trial's results were good. We were already a satisfied customer of Van der Knaap and decided to continue with this supplier." Theijssen observed that his plants formed roots very quickly. "We usually deliver our plants to our customers after about 3.5 weeks. In that period they become firmly established in the plugs." That's also an advantage in automatic repotting. "By that stage the cutting's roots have penetrated the entire plug, making it easy to pick up the plugs automatically without



Robin Theijssen from Esperit

the risk of them disintegrating." Theijssen is satisfied with the new plug for other reasons, too. "Another major advantage is their fast absorption of water. Holes are drilled in the substrate to make it easier to plant the cuttings in them. That's particularly beneficial for the fragile cuttings of small-leaved plants. It makes our work easier."

## More information

If you would like more information on Obturo® or if you'd like to see the trial yourself, please contact Karel de Bruijn at +31 (0)174 296606.



Fuchsias grown in Obturo®

From propagation to cultivation

# Phalaenopsis

The past few years the Van der Knaap Group has been developing and testing various products for the cultivation of Phalaenopsis. In 2009 we introduced our first coco Knaap Orchid Substrate (KOS). Two years earlier we had already started to develop our Fibre-Neth® plug, which makes it easier for propagators to sort their Phalaenopsis and propagate plants separately. Since then we have introduced a new orchid substrate, KOS 073, and have arrived at the latest addition to our plugs, Fibre-Neth® Twin 3.0.

## Fibre-Neth® Twin 3.0

It is now seven years ago that we started to develop a plug to make it easier for propagators to sort their Phalaenopsis and propagate



Phalaenopsis in Fibre-Neth® Twin 3.0

plants separately. Our efforts have now resulted in our Fibre-Neth® Twin 3.0, a plug consisting of two parts that are made of a special Phalaenopsis substrate based on coco. The tissue-culture plant is clamped between the two parts, which are then inserted into a basket of biodegradable plastic. The baskets are placed in a 72-hole tray. When the young plants have grown enough they are sorted and transferred to a 50-hole tray, in which they are eventually delivered to the customers.

## Trial in 'de Kas'

The orchid trial that is currently being carried out in 'de Kas' combines our Fibre-Neth® Twin 3.0 with our Knaap Orchid Substrate (KOS 073). The plants were propagated in the plugs that we produce and continued their development in KOS 073, a substrate based on coarse coco and bark.

## KOS 073

Previous trials had shown that our Knaap Orchid Substrate (KOS), which contains no bark products, is an excellent alternative to traditional bark mixtures. However, growers commented that the coco substrate dries too quickly and calls for a different irrigation strategy that is difficult to incorporate in current cultivation practices. That prompted us to develop the new orchid substrate KOS 073.

As far as KOS 073 is concerned, it's important that its drying behaviour is in line with that of the existing substrates, to enable its smooth incorporation in present cultivation procedures. The substrate must dry quickly enough, but the moisture must remain available for the plants for four days. The substrate consists of both bark and coco, with the bark providing the skeleton and the coco ensuring the distribution of water, a nutrient buffer and the required capillary action in the pot. With our own coco fractions we can meet the requirements of our customers' irrigation regimes and determine the drying rate. The addition of coco makes it possible to control conditions in the substrate. We are going to continue our efforts to further improve our substrate in consultation with growers.

## Interco Double Air®

In the trial in 'de Kas' the plug plants were planted in Orchid Double Air® pots. They are < 12 cm pots with a double oxygen cone and a stake-holding base. The plug containing the plant is placed on the cone to allow direct contact with the air in the

cone, ensuring good drying of the core. The position of the plug on the cone of the Double Air pot prevents the risk of the top roots growing too high, while the holes in the base make it easy to stake the plants uniformly.

## More information?

If you would like more information on Van der Knaap's various solutions for the cultivation of Phalaenopsis, or if you would like to see our trial in 'de Kas', please contact Karel de Bruijn at +31 (0)174 296606.



Trial using KOS 073 in 'de Kas'

# Growrite SA8000 certified

**Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are key concerns for the Van der Knaap Group, which is why our coco-production site Growrite Sri Lanka has been participating in the United Nations' Global Compact initiative since 2008. Last September Growrite was officially granted the SA8000 certificate.**

## SA8000® Standard

The SA8000 Standard was formulated by SAI (Social Accountability International). SAI is an NGO whose mission is to advance the human rights of workers around the world. Over the years, SA8000 has become one of the world's leading social standards for decent work. The standard is a tool for implementing internatio-

## Core themes

The SA8000 Standard focuses on nine core themes: (1) child labour, (2) forced or compulsory labour, (3) health and safety, (4) freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, (5) discrimination, (6) disciplinary practices, (7) working hours, (8) remuneration and (9) management systems. Criteria have been formulated for each of these core themes. For example, child labour will not be tolerated and there shall be no discrimination. The organisation ensures that workers are offered a safe workplace and that they are fairly remunerated. These are but a few of the criteria. For more information on SA8000 go to [www.sa-intl.org](http://www.sa-intl.org).

## Scope

SA8000 can be universally applied



Growrite Sri Lanka workers

nal labour standards that protect workers in every link in the chain. It supports employers in considering the importance of every job and recognising the equality of every person who is involved in the chain, from workers to retailers and consumers. SA8000 is a certificate for three years with audits every six months.

at almost any type of company, irrespective of its size, location and industry/sector. There are now more than 3,000 SA8000-certified companies in 65 different countries. They represent 65 industries and have a total workforce of more than 1.8 million.

## AGENDA 2015

### STRAWBERRY DAY

**Wednesday 7 January**

### SOFT FRUIT CONFERENCE

**Thursday 8 January**

The Van der Knaap Group will be participating in the annual Aardbeidag (Strawberry Day) and the Soft Fruit Conference in the Brabanthallen Congress Centre in Den Bosch. Visit our stand and we will tell you all about our products for growing strawberries and other soft fruit.

### TROPICAL PLANT INDUSTRY EXHIBITION

**Wednesday 21 -**

**Friday 23 January**

The past few years the TPIE in Florida, US, was so successful that we have decided to attend the exhibition again this year. You will find us at stand number 1938.

### IPM ESSEN

**Tuesday 27 -**

**Friday 30 January**

As in the previous years the Van der Knaap Group will be represented at this large international fair in the German town of Essen. You will find us in hall 3, stand 3D18.

### TUINBOUW RELATIEDAGEN GORINCHEM

**Tuesday 10 -**

**Thursday 12 February**

We look forward to informing you about our products at the Tuinbouw Relatiedagen horticultural fair in Gorinchem.

### SALON DU VÉGÉTAL

**Tuesday 17 -**

**Thursday 19 February**

Van der Knaap will be represented at the Végétal in Angers, France, this year too. Please feel free to visit us there for an informal talk about our products.

Would you like more information about topics in this newsletter?  
Simply contact our Public Relations Department: tel. +31 (0)174 296606.