

New face at Van der Knaap

Nick Boelen joined the Van der Knaap Group as Area Sales Manager on 1 March. Within the export team, Nick is tasked with the sales of Van der Knaap Group products in North and South America.

Nick has wide experience in the horticultural sector. "With my previous employers, my area of responsibility was within the Benelux. It has always been an ambition of mine to operate on an international level, and the Van der Knaap Group has now offered me that chance."

"In recent years, a good customer network has been created in North and South America, and my job now is to expand that customer base."

"I have now been working for two months and have already met various existing and potential customers and Van der Knaap representatives in different regions of the world. I am really looking forward to spreading sales of the wonderful products offered by Van der Knaap all over the world."



Nick Boelen

Contact

Would you like to contact Nick? He can be reached at +31 (0)174 525050 or nick@vanderknaap.info.

Coco Discs in retail concepts

Professional growers have used Coco Discs for many years. The discs provide precisely the right volume of substrate to fill the pot and have the correct physical and chemical properties.

In the past, a bag of potting soil was usually supplied with green 'grow your own' concepts.



Coco Discs

However, these bags of soil also had some disadvantages. For instance, the composition of the soil was not always suitable for the plants being grown, and fungal growth often formed in the damp soil. There was also a practical drawback: the soil supplied with the product just about fitted into the packaging, so there was no extra space left for anything like a bag of seed, or growing instructions.

But now, with Coco Discs, we can offer a fantastic solution. The disc fits into the pot snugly and is dry, so it can easily be packaged with other products. The discs also have a long shelf-life, enabling the packers to start processing the packaging at an early stage – which is particularly important

with large orders. Van der Knaap Group can supply Coco Discs in many sizes; in diameters ranging from three to 20 cm. This wide range of diameters ensures there is a suitable disc for virtually every pot size. For the consumer market, fertilisers are added to the coco potting soil, to give young plants a chance to establish well in the first few weeks. The fact that coco substrate is extremely environmentally friendly and sustainable is an additional argument that can help convince retailers to include Coco Discs in their concepts.

For more information, please contact Van der Knaap Retail at +31 (0)174 525050.

Cultivation in pots and as cut flowers

Steerable substrate for Calla

Calla cultivation is characterised by the immense range of varieties encompassing a huge diversity of cultivars, each with its own, specific features. Growers also have to deal with the various origins of the bulbs and their quality. Diverse systems and methods are used in nurseries that propagate calla in pots, or grow cut flowers. Therefore, it's quite a challenge to grow good plants successfully.

Selection

Breeders and suppliers of bulbs already take steps to facilitate the process. In the preliminary stages, they not only examine the external traits, but also apply important selection criteria to bulb quality and shelf-life. Bulb growers are becoming increasingly aware that correctly storing bulbs is an essential part of producing a healthy bulb suitable for planting up to be grown further. A sound foundation increases the chance of success for the growers.

Steerable substrate

In its testing facility 'de Kas', Van der Knaap's Research & Development department has conducted intensive research for many years into the right choice of substrate for calla cultivation. The results provided by the various studies have led to a series of practical trails aimed at optimising the substrates to better suit the needs of existing and new customers. The result is a steerable substrate. This is important, especially in calla cultivation, to prevent losses and to maximise plant development and growth.



Calla root system

A steerable substrate is a substrate that can be influenced, and steered, by applying certain cultivation measures. Maintaining a good, airy structure, correct water distribution ratio, rapid up-take of water and moderate water

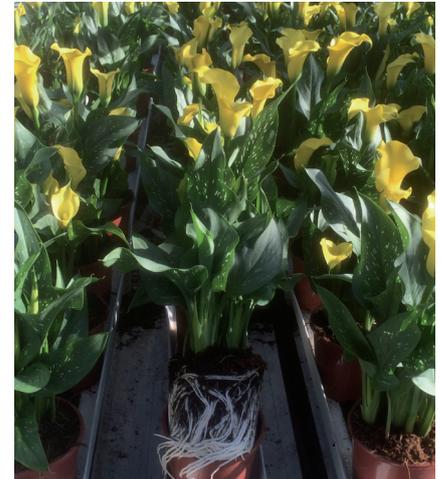


Calla propagated as cut flowers

retention properties are important parameters. If these factors can be managed properly, losses can be significantly reduced.

Pots and cut flowers

The basic demands placed on substrate for growing plants in pots or as cut flowers are virtually identical at the start of cultivation. The substrate must be able to absorb moisture easily, must not remain too wet and must be able to drain away excess water equally easily. This will ensure healthy root development without plant loss in every season of the year. The requirements start to differ as cultivation progresses. For example, with cut flowers the stem length and thickness are important, so irrigation and nutrition are essential. Excess moisture is undesirable, but plentiful irrigation must remain possible if necessary. On the other hand, plants grown in pots should



Calla root system

not be allowed to develop long stems. They can be propagated on drier substrate, but care must be taken to avoid flowers dying caused by a lack of water. It is also important to consider the shelf-life of the plants further on in the chain. The substrate must offer a sufficiently large moisture buffer.

Coco

The specific properties of coco in the mixture also make the difference in calla growing. The right combination of the various raw materials ensures better rooting of the entire rootball or container. This gives the advantage of fewer visible roots on the outside of the pot or container. The influence of climate on the outside of the pot or container has a negative impact on the roots; good root development in the entire rootball makes a plant less vulnerable.

More information

For more information, please contact Theo Bouwman, at +31 (0)174 525050.

Natural resaturation

For many years, Van der Knaap has used a variety of coco products. For example, Knaap Profit Extra, the coarse coco chunks that create structure and stability in potting soil. Or Coco Crunch, short coco fibres that ensure a good water distribution ratio, and sufficient drainage if excess water is given. And Knaap Basic, the versatile and widely applicable coir from Van der Knaap with a high air-holding capacity.

Properties of coco

All coco products share an easy water absorption capacity. For this reason, coco coir is contained in potting soil mixtures used to grow plants in drier conditions.



Trial with bedding plants

Coco coir can offer the solution in circumstances where dry patches tend to occur easily.

Bedding plants

One of the cultivations where Knaap Basic (coco coir) offers added value is bedding plants. The time when plants are potted up at the end of the year to overwinter and spend a lengthy period 'as dry as possible', can result in a lack of uniformity. Once uniformity has been lost, it is a challenge to get the plants consistent again. In the dark winter months and early spring when less water is given, pots can dry out very rapidly. Pots that stay relatively moister can re-absorb water with no trouble and retain the required moisture level more easily. Drier pots have more difficulty; they absorb insufficient moisture whereby the differences between wet and dry continue to increase. In these, but also many

similar situations, adding coco can be the solution.

WAC-analysis

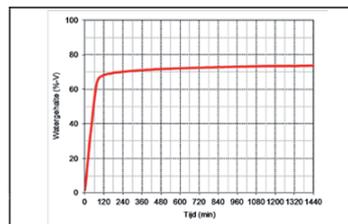
To illustrate this, we sent two mixtures to an external laboratory to determine the Water Absorption Capacity (WAC). WAC-analysis is a standardised analysis method used to determine the degree of resaturation. The potting soil is dried, then spread over a thin layer of water. Subsequently, the time it takes the potting soil to absorb the water is measured.

WAC-analysis was performed on two potting soil mixes for bedding plants. Blend 1 was a 'traditional' bedding plant mixture. Blend 2 was the same mixture, but with a small proportion of peat replaced by Knaap Basic. Analysis reveals that the total water absorption remains the same (see graph and table): 74% with blend 1 and 73% with blend 2.

However, the 50% moment, that indicates how many minutes it takes to absorb 50% of the moisture, shows a huge difference. Blend 1 recorded 39 minutes, while blend 2 recorded just seven minutes. After 15 minutes, blend 2 had reached a moisture content of 64% - which represents 90% of the total moisture content. With blend 1, the traditional bedding plant mix, this took 60 to 90 minutes.

A mixture that contains a proportion of coco, simply absorbs water faster. Dry pots will absorb water, and disparities in growth between plants in dry and wet pots will be reduced or even prevented entirely. A brief irrigation session is more than enough to hydrate the pots.

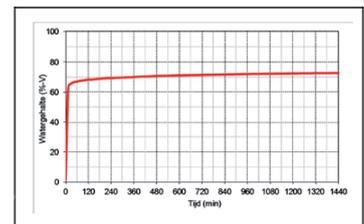
Mixture 1



50% point uptake : 39 minutes

water uptake (%) ¹	
after number of minutes	
start	- 1
15	- 15
30	- 29
60	- 54
90	- 67
120	- 68
240	- 70
360	- 71
1440	- 74

Mixture 2



50% point uptake : 7 minutes

water uptake (%) ¹	
after number of minutes	
start	- 1
15	- 64
30	- 66
60	- 67
90	- 68
120	- 68
240	- 69
360	- 70
1440	- 73

Table and graph WAC-analysis blend 1 and blend 2

Hortiflorexpo IPM in Shanghai

The 17th Hortiflorexpo IPM took place in Shanghai from 22 - 24 April. The Van der Knaap Group was present at the stand of our distributor DGSTAR from Guangzhou. DGSTAR distributes Van der Knaap products in the south of China and purchases mainly coco blocks from our production plants in India. The provinces of Guangzhou and Fujian in the south east of China form the main production regions for pot plants, while Yunnan province in the south west of the country is the major ornamental plant production region. Together with DGSTAR, we see plenty of opportunities to expand on our market share of coco. Compared with other suppliers, the physical properties of our products are superior and this quality is noticed

ons, Van der Knaap Group sees great prospects for the Forteco coco slabs specifically as part of a cultivation model which will be introduced as a new concept. Current hot topics on the Chinese market are the sharp rise in domestic demand for better quality and safety, a growing demand for packaged food and the further development of exports. Satisfying these demands will necessitate improvements in varieties, cultivation techniques and technology, chain management, logistics and food processing.

In the field of cultivation techniques, Van der Knaap firmly believes it can offer an appropriate concept in the form of the Forteco product range combined with professional supervision and



Stand Van der Knaap Group at Hortiflorexpo 2015

and valued by end users. There are also options to introduce more Van der Knaap products in the south. Examples include plant plugs and high quality substrates for specific applications combined with expert advice and after sales service. The more northerly Shandong province is the major production region for fruit and vegetables, followed by Hebei and Henan provinces. In these regi-

after sales. During the trade event, contacts were established with various parties so that further steps can be taken in these regions.

Our presence at the event was a highly positive experience, and the Chinese vegetable and ornamental plant market offers huge challenges and opportunities for the Van der Knaap Group.

AGENDA 2015

CULTIVATE '15

Saturday 11 - Tuesday 14 July

During Cultivate '15 in Columbus, Ohio, USA, the Van der Knaap Group will be at stand number 1311.

STRAWBERRY DEMO DAY

Friday 4 September

The seventh edition of the Strawberry Demo Day will be held on 4 September at the Vermeeren nursery in Rijsbergen. Van der Knaap Group will be attending.

FOUR OAKS

Tuesday 8 - Wednesday 9 September

This year we will be exhibiting at the Four Oaks Trade Show in Great Britain for the first time with our own stand. Our stand number is C88.

GROOTGROENPLUS

Wednesday 30 September - Friday 2 October

Van der Knaap Group will again be attending this year's edition of the international nursery stock trade fair in Zundert.

GROSOUTH

Wednesday 11 November 2015

Just like last year, we will be exhibiting again at this year's horticultural exhibition GroSouth, which is being organised at Roundstone Nurseries in Great Britain.

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

group of companies
www.vanderknaap.info