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GROMOR DECEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

What a month November was with the release of the “State Capture” report in South Africa and Donald Trump being elected President of the USA. With all the problems faced by SA, I just hope Gordham can avoid SA Bonds being downgraded to “junk status”. It does not look promising!

On the positive side we’ve had sufficient rain in Southern Natal to ensure good seed germination of early planted maize. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, Northern Natal was still very dry.

In the greater Durban/Pietermaritzburg area, plant growth in gardens has taken off. Whilst composting and fertilizing will help nurture plant growth, it will not act as a weedkiller as some people seem to think it should! In fact, if you’re trying to grow sun loving plants in a shady area that has been composted, weeds are likely to flourish!

Having got behind in my reading, I only recently picked up the Farmers Weekly of 7 October 2016. As usual Denene Erasmus’ editorial made for interesting reading. “----- there is a serious threat posed to the future of agriculture because young people are no longer interested in following a career in farming. This is a global problem, affecting the agricultural sector from sub-Sahara Africa to the USA, Europe and Asia. The average age of a farmer in SA is 62, whilst in Sub Saharan Africa it is 60. In the USA it is 55, in Japan it is 67 and in Europe one third of farmers are older than 65”

In SA and Zimbabwe politics has played a major role in these disturbing figures. Younger people with skills and loan capital available to establish economic farming units, face an uncertain future due to political interference or the threat thereof, which makes them shy away. I personally have seen this happen. In 1987 I coached a South African polocrosse side which travelled to Zim for a Series. On speaking to the Zimbabweans I was surprised to find that they were not concerned about what was happening there with Mugabe as President. Mugabe they felt, knew he needed them and would not touch them. Well, 10 years later they had all lost their farms! (We were hammered in the series, losing 3-0!)

Plants can move water from their roots to their apex at between 2 to 6m/h depending on transpiration rate which is effected by air temperature, wind, sunlight, plant species, growth stage and the SOILS NUTRITIONAL STATUS (including Soil Organic Matter. RH). A balanced crop nutrition programme results in plants not having to continually draw excess water from the soil to find nutrients.

In acid soils (pH<6) many plant nutrients are locked up, resulting in plants continuously drawing more water to find nutrients required for growth. Liming acid soils to reduce acidity saves soil moisture. We often forget that there is a vast store of water in the subsoil. If the subsoil is acid, one gets virtually no root growth there, resulting in little uptake of moisture from the subsoil. To rectify this, do subsoil analysis and if found to be acid, lime and deep plough.

Subsoil acidity often rears it’s head when SOIL ORGANIC MATTER is allowed to drop below 2½% and high levels of NITROGEN fertilizer are used. NITROGEN fertilizer includes LAN, UREA, 4.1.1, 5.1.5 and Ammonium Sulphate. If these fertilizers have been regularly applied without compost, do yourself a favour and have a subsoil analysis done. How?

Take a slice or 2 or 3 from the subsoil i.e. below a spades depth and have it analysed. Gromor has soil analysis boxes and will get the sample up to Cedara for you.

Finally, soil surface evaporation can be reduced with no-till and mulching, whilst at the same time building up Soil Organic Matter, which holds 7 to 10 times its weight in water (F.W 14/10/16 Felicity Mitchell)

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

Whilst most nurseries, gardeners and farmers will survive if they run out of regularly used GROMOR products for a short while, it can be a catastrophe for HYDROPONIC farmers if they run out of their standard water soluble fertilizers. If you are into hydroponics, make sure to have sufficient hydroponic fertilizer in stock to last you over closedown.

SEEDLING GROWERS should also ensure that they have adequate GROMOR SEEDLING MIX, to keep their production schedules on track.

We're asking for your co-operation in maintaining an orderly closedown. Placement of orders close on the 9th December, with any orders placed by this date, being ensured of delivery. Office staff will be on duty up to the 15 December and Gromor will open again on the 9th January 2017.

It's time to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and thank you for your support over the year. Collin and his team try continuously to make GROMOR a better company to deal with. Please help us in our endeavours to achieve this by letting us know when things go right, as well as when service slips.

Regards,

GROMOR (PTY) LTD

R. HAGEN

PS: The English Winter ends in July and starts in August. George Byron 1788 – 1824 English Poet.

Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner – George Byron (I had to include this, as my late father who was Norwegian, never learnt Afrikaans except for one saying, which he'd repeat and kill himself laughing at whenever he'd had a few drinks. Adam looking amorously at Eve "ek het jou leaf")

An honest politician is one who when he is bought, will stay bought. Simon Cameron 1799-1889 American Politician. (That was over 100 years ago!)

The less one has to do, the less time one finds to do it in. Lord Chesterfield 1860-1904 (I can confirm this since retiring a few years ago!)

In those days he was wiser than he is now; he used to frequently take my advice. Winston Churchill – English Statesman, (probably speaking about his son.)

A father and son in conversation. "Son, at your age Winston Churchill would be up and out for his 5am morning walk."

Son: "Dad, at your age he'd become Prime Minister of England."

It is a socialist idea that making profits is a vice. I consider the real vice is making losses. Winston Churchill. (Having been elected on a Socialist ticket, our RSA Government is operating true to form). It saves a lot of trouble if, instead of having to earn money and save it, you can just go and borrow it. Winston Churchill. (Fine, except that the more one borrows the more expensive it gets and with the RSA facing a "junk" rating, let's hope we have not passed the "tipping point"!)