

### GROMOR SEPTEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

I'm starting the Gromor September newsletter after having returned from my twice weekly early morning cycle, swim and breakfast on the Durban beachfront. Whilst not always as clean as it could be, with dirty ablutions and beach showers out of order for long periods, it's an incredibly fascinating place, epitomising the country we live in. I'm struck by the many Muslim families with their youngsters running, cycling or skating around; now and again one even sees them splashing in the water. Walk a little further and there are the Nazarenes in their white robes, gathered on the waterfront to perform "christenings" at sunrise. This seems to take two men to drag a screaming, fighting woman into the "deep", to duck their heads under water! Later I meet the one christened lady up at the beach showers, which incidentally are now working! She has carefully styled dreadlocks, a little ruffled after her "ordeal". Smiling she turns to me and in impeccable english says "God, did you see how they tried to drown me!" Then walking along the shallows I come across an elderly african lady standing on the water's edge, with an empty 2ℓ Coke bottle. I can see that she is totally bewildered as to how she is going to fill it without drowning! Without a word I take the bottle from her, wade into the water, fill it and give it back full of sea water and a little sand. I'll never forget the surprise on her face as she looked at me and said "God bless you". There are also the walkers, sometimes with dogs, joggers and bikers, slow and fast, young and old; never forgetting the youngsters on skateboards whizzing around. In the water are the surfers who entertain with their grace and spectacular wipe outs. We even get to see Pat Lambie with the SA flag painted on his surfboard from time to time. I must also mention the car guards who do an excellent job looking after our bikes, keys and cars.

#### SOIL ANALYSIS

There are two main types of soil analysis. The Albrecht system and the local one used by most of SA's recognised Soil Science Labs, including Cedara.

The Albrecht system was formulated by Prof Albrecht, who I think was active in Mousouri around the 1930's. In essence it is based on fertilizing to get the soil macro cation ratios (i.e. calcium, magnesium and potassium) in line with what he considered yielded the best results. The macro anions (nitrogen and sulphur) somehow did not receive the same attention, in his recommendations.

Whilst there are many adherents that swear by the Albrecht system, advances in soil science have shown up some questionable recommendations e.g. high calcitic lime applications no neutral and high pH soils, to bring the calcium : magnesium ratio in line.

I personally prefer the Cedara analysis. My only wish is that they would put more emphasis on Soil Organic Matter and the need to build it up where necessary. I think the figure should be a minimum of 2½% SOM. Instead they simply measure the carbon ( $C \times 1,72 = SOM$ ).

Getting SOM to 2½% and above, is much easier in a clay soil (>25% clay) than it is in a sandy soil.

I also wish that Cedara were a little quicker with their analysis!

Some points to bear in mind

1. If you are a farmer or even a smallholder, get hold of a soil auger. Soil Science Cedara (033 355 9447) will be able to tell you where. Taking accurate soil samples can save one a lot of money, through spending wisely on fertilizer.
2. If you're a gardener, take slices of soil to a spade's depth, from different spots in the area being analysed and mix together.
3. Soil sample boxes are available from Cedara or Gromor.

## **FERTILIZER/COMPOST APPLICATIONS**

1. Both farmers and gardeners often unknowingly apply excessive nitrogen, especially ammonium nitrogen, which leads to subsoil acidity.

Ammonium nitrogen not only comes from straight urea and ammonium sulphate, it also forms part of the nitrogen in most fertilizer blends (e.g. 5.1.5 (36) etc.). What subsoil acidity does, is to stop plant roots from going deeper than spade or plough depth, depriving the plant of nutrients and moisture in the subsoil.

If you suspect this could be you, take some samples BELOW the auger or spade depth and compare the pH to that of the upper sample level. If the lower samples are more acid, you're developing subsoil acidity which is a big problem. Seek expert advice!

2. For Gardeners, applying fertilizer is often a problem. It's simpler to mix it with compost before spreading.

To 1 x 30dm<sup>3</sup> bag GROMOR compost, mix 300g to 500g GROMOR fertilizer and spread over 20m<sup>2</sup> to 30m<sup>2</sup>

Depending on the state of your garden, this can be done once or twice a year, preferably one of the times being in spring.

## **POTPLANTS**

GROMOR Potsoil is fortified with plant nutrients, but being well drained to prevent waterlogging, these nutrients are leached out in a relatively short period, making regular feeding desirable.

Dissolve 5g (1 teaspoon) of GROMOR PLANT FOOD in 5ℓ water and give a light watering with this solution to all potplants, once a week. Additional watering can be done with straight water, one of which should leach out the bottom of the pot.

GROMOR PLANT FOOD can also be used as a FOLIAR SPRAY and for SEEDLINGS from a week after germination. The above should preferably be done in the early morning, avoiding the heat of the day.

By all means bring some of your used potsoil to GROMOR for an EC and pH test, which will give you an indication of whether you're starving or overfeeding your potplants.

Regards,

**GROMOR (PTY) LTD**

## **R. HAGEN**

PS: Donald Trump sent one of his top henchmen to Ireland on a special mission to find a typical Irishman for a promotional feature. After some thought the henchman walked into an Irish workingman's pub and announced that he was looking for an Irishman who could down 20 Guinness's in an hour without falling down and if successful, he'd earn himself the equivalent of \$5000. I'll give you an hour to make up your minds about taking up the challenge he told them. Most of them simply carried on drinking and talking, but the henchman noticed that one of the men walked out hurriedly. Time passed and with just a few minutes remaining for taking up the challenge, the man who had walked out, appeared and asked to take it up. He got going, downing one after another and finished the 20<sup>th</sup>, with just 2 minutes to spare. The henchman was impressed and dug into his pocket for the Irishman's winnings. Just one thing the henchman asked; "I noticed you walking out when I put out the challenge and returning just in time to take it up. What were you doing in that hour?." That's easy said the Irishman; "I went to the pub next door to check if I could down 20 Guinness's in an hour and found I could!".