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GROMOR APRIL 2017 NEWSLETTER

HYDROPONICS

In last month's newsletter I indicated that without a goodly level of money, growing experience and enthusiasm, hydroponics was likely to fail. With this in mind it was interesting to read Prof. Gert Venter's (profgventer@gmail.com) article on the 13 February 2017 Farmers Weekly: "Hydroponics: seawater greenhouses." I quote: **Australian Seawater Greenhouse**

The Australian Seawater Greenhouse in Port Augusta was built to address a range of challenges that are similar to those encountered in South Africa. These problems include water scarcity, salinity and rising input costs. It comprises an array of solar-collecting, sun-tracking mirrors around a high tower in the fore-ground. Several seawater greenhouses are alongside the mirrors.

The latter reflect the sun's rays onto the top of a central tower, where the energy is stored in the form of latent heat. This is used to melt salt at a far higher temperature than the boiling point of water. The salt is then stored in its liquid form, and the heat used to supply electricity on demand, 24 hours/day. (I've summarised this, so hope I've got it right!)

The excess distilled water produced by the seawater greenhouses is stored in reservoirs and used to irrigate the crops and trees growing outside. The arid areas along the west coast of South Africa and Namibia are ideal for the development of similar seawater greenhouses.

GROMOR has a small range of well balanced, complete water soluble fertilizers suitable for use in hydroponics and seedling production.

GROMOR New Generation Coastal Blend (Contains soluble P + Micros but No Ca)

GROMOR 3.1.3(37) ws Complete (contains soluble P, Ca and Micros)

AQUASOL Calcium Nitrate (Soluble CaNO_3)

For the small grower and gardener

GROMOR PLANT FOOD. A complete MACRO and MICRO element water soluble plant food, in 500g and 2kg Tubs.

RAINWATER

In the March 2016 Newsletter I made a one line reference about trying to setup your Hydroponic Growing structures to use rainwater collected from rooves.

Someone reported to me that they had tried it and found it to be a disaster!

Water collected from rooves and stored in tanks quickly got contaminated from pollutants on the rooves and that literally within days was green with algae and fungi contaminants, which not only clogged up the pipes but also effected plant growth.

Whilst the addition of chlorine to the water will purify it, one is never sure how much will affect plant growth.

Rather use the rainwater on the soil where "Mother nature" will take care of pollutants!

SOIL RHIZOSPHERE

On average soil comprises:

± 45% mineral matter

± 25% air

± 25% water

± 5% Soil Organic Matter (this is generous with most of our soils now under 2½%)

The rhizosphere comprises a narrow band of soil that surrounds plant roots, the area where mineral and organic matter intersect. Roots give off exudates, making it an active “living area” with a high population of soil life.

Plant roots give decomposer organisms access to what was initially inactive carbon (C).

This carbon (C) then gets processed by the plant root exudate oxalic acid, causing the population of soil microbes in the rhizosphere to increase by as much as 100% to further process the carbon and make it active.

Soil Organic Matter which is calculated as Cx1,7, remains the foundationstone of healthy soil. It is the place where plant nutrients already in the soil or recently added via chemical or organic fertilizers are stored and made available for plant growth when required.

Look after Soil Organic Matter!

Regards,

GROMOR (PTY) LTD

R. HAGEN

PS: A man charged with shoplifting appears in court.

Magistrate: “What did you actually steal?” Accused: “I honestly didn’t steal anything sir – my mind was on other things, causing me absentmindedly to walk out of the shop without paying.” Magistrate:

“What did you not pay for?” Accused: “A small tin of peaches sir”

Magistrate: “How many peaches were in the can?” Accused: “I reckon about 5 sir.”

Magistrate: “Then I sentence you to 5 days in jail.”

Just then a woman stands up in court and says “Sir, I’m the accused’s wife” “may I say something?”

Magistrate: “Go ahead.” “He neglected to tell you that there was also a tin of peas in the packet he walked out with.”

PPS: A lady driving along stops to pick up a dishevelled woman, who has obviously come through rough times. She tries to strike up a conversation with the woman, but hardly gets a response. After some awkward silent minutes, the woman notices a paper bag next to the driver’s seat and asks “what’s in that bag?” Driver: “It’s a bottle of wine I got for my husband”! This elicits the response: “good trade!”