



**GROMOR (PTY) LTD**  
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### **GROMOR DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER**

Most of KZN soils, except those in the Northern drier parts, are acid. Failing to lime acid soils in order to raise the pH, can waste considerable money, as nutrient uptake will not reach its maximum. In view of this, it has been good to see the number of farmers who applied lime and gypsum after harvesting this year. There has also been awakened interest in applying “no till” principles.

In the garden an application of 300g/m<sup>2</sup> of GROMOR Lime and 20g of GYPSUM, dug in every 3 to 5 years will also generally be beneficial. But take care, as there are plants such as citrus (especially lemon) hydrangeas and azaleas that do not do well on limed soils. Find out before liming!

Don't be tempted to use coarse lime. Prof Fey put it very clearly when he said that whilst lime does move in the soil, coarse lime particles are valuable only if you are prepared to wait 100 years for the benefits! He also said that a near neutral pH target is an expensive myth, perpetuated by advisers with nothing more than limited horticultural appreciation of soil chemistry! Prof Fey does not mince his words!

Take care when using gypsum on irrigated and/or well-watered garden soils. Whilst gypsum is neutral, it may react lower in the soil profile causing an acid response from the sulphur. The reason for this is that the sulphur in gypsum is soluble and thus will leach, adding to the chance of subsoil acidity.

Prof Fey had this to say about it. Irrigation farmers often use gypsum indiscriminately; its benefits could be outweighed by the negative effect of accelerated build-up of more soluble salts in the subsoil.

### **SOUTH AFRICA'S PROPOSED SUGAR TAX**

The proposed Sugar Tax has been postponed to 2018. Ostensibly its introduction is aimed at cutting the addiction to sugary drinks, which the government has blamed for the increase in population obesity. I cannot see it attaining its goal, but what it will do is raise more seriously needed money for the fiscus?

### **TAMPERING WITH NATURE**

Dave Pepler is a very interesting local radio presenter. Speaking at an information day hosted by the Dried Fruit and Technical Services and Canning Fruit Producer's Association, he delivered the following presentation. A major malaria epidemic broke out in a heavily forested region of Borneo in 1953. To manage the malaria epidemic, they resorted to spraying DDT, with devastating consequences. Whilst the DDT did kill the mosquitoes responsible for the malaria, it also killed the geckos that fed and kept in check the caterpillars that fed on the banana leaves used for the roofs of local houses. Three years later there was hardly a roof left and those repaired, soon collapsed because the caterpillar population had recovered more rapidly than the gecko population. At the same time a rat plague broke out, because the cat population was wiped out due to eating DDT poisoned geckos. Cats were eventually parachuted in from helicopters in an effort to solve the rat problem.

Take care when tampering with nature! Funny how this does not put me against GMO's, where I so far see only benefits.

### **PLANTING**

last month under the heading “Field Crops” suitable for the suburban garden,” I included carrots under planting bigger seeds in situ. This was a mistake as carrot seeds are tiny, Sorry!

## **SOIL HEALTH**

If you have been reading my monthly newsletters, you are no doubt tired of hearing about Soil Organic Matter (SOM) and how it is the foundation of soil health. What has always concerned me is that one gets active and inactive carbon (C). In a standard soil analysis these are not distinguished, with SOM being calculated direct from C. Inactive carbon has little beneficial short-term effect and can in fact deplete available soil nitrogen. The SOM calculation from C furthermore will be distorted if inactive C is high.

The Sugar Association Soil Lab has a test that can distinguish this and has also come up with a C:N ratio analysis. Neil Miles tells me there is also the Solvita Kit that can distinguish it. Look up on Google for information on the Solvita Kit.

Whilst SOM of over 2½% should be aimed for, over 4% is better. In Sandy Soils it is however difficult to get over 1½%. Read the Farmers Weekly 13 October 2017 page 44,45,46 in which Neil Miles explains all this better than I can. We are lucky here in KZN to have some outstanding Soil Scientists in Neil Miles, Alan Manson, Guy Thibout and Mart Farina (if you can get him out of retirement!)

## **PLANTING FERTILIZER**

If you are not planting with an ORGANIC fertilizer like GROMOR ACCELERATOR which has a balanced range of nutrients, make sure that any other planting fertilizer used, contains phosphorous. Phosphorous is represented by the middle number in a compound fertilizer. For example, in 2.3.2, phosphorous is represented by the 3. A fertilizer like 1.0.1 has no phosphorous.

## **GROMOR DECEMBER 2017 SHUTDOWN**

We at Gromor would like to thank you for your continuous support in what has been an extremely tough year for all of us. You included!

For us to recharge our batteries we will be taking a short break over the Christmas and New Year period.

### **Our operating times will be follows:**

Orders will be taken for delivery up until Thursday 14th December 2017

Last delivery day will be the 21st of December 2017

Last collection will be 15h00 on Thursday the 21st December 2017 after which the office will be closed.

Our offices will re-open 8th January 2018

Orders for delivery will re-open 8th January 2018

If you are travelling, to a Christmas destination, please drive carefully. We wish you a prosperous 2018.

Regards,

**GROMOR (PTY) LTD**

## **R. HAGEN**

PS: **One too many.**

A cop pulls a man over for suspected drunk driving. The policeman opens the door and the driver falls out onto the asphalt.

The cop says: "My goodness, you're so drunk, you can't even walk!"

The drunk says: "Well exactly, that's why I took my car"

A man is staggering home drunk late at night when he's stopped by a policeman. "What are you doing out at this time of night?" asks the officer.

"I'm going to a lecture," replies the man.

"And who's going to give a lecture at this hour?" ask the policeman.

"My wife," replies the man.