



GROMOR (PTY) LTD
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P.O. Box 89, Cato Ridge 3680 • Tel: 031 782 0002, 031 782 3105

Fax: 031 782 1431, 086 641 2589

Cell: 083 946 6079, E-mail: gromor@iafrica.com

www.gromor.co.za

GROMOR JANUARY 2018 NEWSLETTER

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO – WHO’S HE I CAN HEAR SOME

I recently read a transcript of an interview with Lawrence Dallaglio, the former England Rugby Captain and only team member to play every single minute of England’s 2003 winning Rugby World Cup campaign.

A giant of a man, both physically and mentally, he was quoted as saying. “Losing is disgusting! There is absolutely nothing good about it”. Playing at the top level as he did, he felt this philosophy was essential, and that whilst talent was important, it needed to be coupled with an unquenchable thirst for learning and perfecting all aspects of the game, which took hours and hours of practice, day after day after day.

Playing at the top level does not come easy for anybody, especially not the people who make it look easy – they have suffered to reach that standard and in rugby, like all sport, one is faced by another team that also hates to lose. They want to destroy your hard work and deprive you from leaving the pitch carrying the trophy.

In the final analysis, Dallaglio felt that winning or losing begins and ends with what’s inside your head- it’s about self-belief, mastering the doubts and techniques.

This philosophy is really no different in reaching your potential in whatever path you choose in life.

GMO’S

There is considerable debate around the effect that GM crops pose on the environment, yet to date results have only been positive.

Wynand vd Walt, a highly respected geneticist who writes for the Farmers weekly and can be contacted via e-mail at farmersweekly@caxton.co.za with Biomonitor in the subject line, reported as follows:

“GM technology has brought many benefits to crop production efficiency, yet ongoing, seemingly unfounded concern persists about their potentially negative effects”. (Maybe this is not a bad thing as it makes companies working with the production of GM Seedstock do exhaustive testing before releasing them onto the market – R. Hagen)

Wynand vd Walt quoted the results of a 10-year global study on the economic and environmental effects that GM crops had, had.

1. It reduced chemical pesticide use by $\pm 37\%$.
2. In a US study with herbicide GM tolerant maize and soya beans, 1,2% less herbicide and 11,2% less insecticide were used, compared to farmers not using GM varieties.
3. China reduced formulated pesticides by ± 78000 tons in 2001, through planting Bt cotton.

What I particularly like is the way that this high-tech development has facilitated conservation farming practices such as no-till and minimum-till, which improves soil health, as well as making the quick planting of a “break” crop possible, leaving the land ready to plant next spring.

US studies have shown that conservation practices like this can save up to a billion tons of soil pa. Studies done on Bt cotton in the US and Australia have also shown it to have a positive effect on the number and diversity of BENEFICIAL insects on cotton lands.

Finally, one must realise that because of the heated debate around GM and Bt crops, regulatory monitoring is very strict.

COMPOST

I do not believe that one can beat the quality of GROMOR COMPOST with it’s manure and organic matter base having been aerobically composted and screened.

Many gardeners do however like to make use of lawn clippings and leaves etc to make their own compost.

If this is you, you can improve the quality considerably by adding 10% to 20% GROMOR CHICKEN LITTER to the vegetative material. GROMOR CHICKEN LITTER contains a high concentration of nutrients in an organic form, which will feed the microbes that get the composting going and in time break it down to humus. Once mixed, ensure that the material is moist (not soaked, as the composting microbes don’t like anaerobic conditions). Then

place the mixed material in a heap or windrow ± 1 m high. If properly made, turning the stack should not be necessary.

ROSES

In the KZN climate, a weekly fungicide and insecticide spray are essential if one wants to grow good roses. Prevam, which kills two birds with one stone (insects and fungi) usually works. If you're not prepared to do this, don't plant roses! If, however you're going ahead, follow the instructions hereunder:

- a) **SITE:** Select a site with plenty of morning and afternoon sun. Don't expect to grow good roses on the shady south side of an avenue of trees or wall.
- b) **PLANTING HOLES:** Roses like a good, well drained loam soil. The poorer your soil, the bigger the planting holes should be. The general recommendation is to dig SQUARE planting holes 300mm wide and knee deep (NOT round). If one is going to water and fertilize regularly, smaller holes will suffice. For bigger plantings, dig a trench with similar dimensions. Fill the holes/trench with a mixture of the TOPSOIL (NOT SUBSOIL) removed and **GROMOR ROSE STARTER** at 1 bag per "planting hole" or metre of trench.
- c) **PLANTING:** In frost free areas, one can plant all year round. In frosty areas, plant from September to January. It is preferable to plant young healthy roses growing in nursery bags, rather than older transplanted or open rooted ones.
Half fill the planting hole/trench with the "TOPSOIL/GROMOR ROSE STARTER mixture" and water. Remove the rose bush from the "plant bag", leaving roots as intact as possible and place in planting hole. Fill hole with the balance of the "TOPSOIL/GROMOR ROSE STARTER mixture" and firm down. When planting, don't allow roots at the bottom of the "plant bag" to bend upwards – rather trim if necessary.
In the case of grafted roses, cover the "bud union" with soil. Press the soil down firmly, water thoroughly and drench for termites next to the stem and over the "bud union".
- d) **WATERING:** Roses thrive on heavy watering and feeding, provided drainage is good. Water twice per week in summer and once a week for the rest of the year.
- e) **MULCHING:** Cover bare soil around the rosebushes with **GROMOR PINEBARK MULCH** to prevent weed growth, stabilise soil temperature and conserve moisture. For "features", GROMOR PINEBARK NUGGETS make an attractive mulch.
- f) **FEEDING:** In early spring, "fork" in lightly 1 bag GROMOR ROSE STAR-TER for every 2 rose bushes and thereafter fertilize every 2 months, alternating with **GROMOR 5.1.5(28)** at 20g/square metre and **GROMOR ACCELERATOR** organic fertilizer pellets at 150g/m².
- g) **PRUNING:** In frost free areas, try "green pruning". In frosty areas, prune in July. With early pruning, one runs the risk of new growth being "burnt" by late frosts. Apply "dead heading" on a routine basis, cutting back unwanted shoots at the same time.
- h) **POTTED ROSES:** For potted roses give a weekly watering with a solution of 1 Teaspoon **GROMOR PLANT FOOD** in 5ℓ water, in addition to the regular watering.

Regards,

GROMOR (PTY) LTD

R. Hagen

PS: As the new year approaches, here are some things to think about.

Milk cartons take ± 5 years to decompose

Cigarette butts take ± 12 years to decompose (Thor Heyerdahl of Kon-Tiki fame is quoted as saying that a cigarette had smouldering tobacco at one end and a fool at the other!)

Tin cans takes ± 50 years to decompose

Now wait for it

Plastic bottles take ± 450 years to decompose

Plastic bags take ± 200 years to ± 1000 years to decompose

PPS: Lewis Gordon Pugh, an environmental campaigner born in 1969, swam 1 km at the North Pole in 2007 in 18min 50sec. – water temperature 1,7°C. (Was he wearing a wet suit – I don't think so, but cannot be certain)