



GROMOR (PTY) LTD
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GROMOR MARCH 2016 NEWSLETTER

It's a small world. I recently had the privilege of speaking to the Kearsney headmaster, Alwyn van den Aardweg and discovered that his first teaching post had been at Pretoria Boys High, where he had in fact also matriculated. I naturally pricked up my ears as Elon Musk, who I wrote about in the February Newsletter, had matriculated there. Well, it turns out that the Kearsney headmaster had taught Elon, recalling him as a quietly spoken, immaculately turned out youngster with perfect manners, a contradiction to the man grew up to become!

DROUGHT

My comments about the drought in February's newsletter were not made to point fingers when I suggested that everyone look around to see if they could learn anything from neighbours in the district who were seemingly coping better with the drought and by following their principles, could in future be better prepared when the next drought comes along - which it definitely will!

The drought saga reminds me of that film "The Big Short," where a handful of investors took up positions on the traditional ultra-stable bond market collapsing in the USA. The investors identified that the banks were "milking" this market and that it was only a matter of time before it all came tumbling down, which it did in 2008 causing ±3million ordinary citizens to lose their homes. An absolute catastrophe, but the majority of people did survive the "crash." I have no doubt that the same will happen in SA to people effected by the drought, but why not take steps now and be ready for it when the next one comes.

Back to agriculture, Dr Richard Teague's presentation at this year's NO TILL congress as reported in the Farmers Weekly of 29 January 2016 made for interesting reading. The theme of the presentation was the best way to manage veld and pasture grazing so as to minimise the damage caused by sun beating down on bare soil. We all know that healthy "soil life" is vital for healthy soil to support healthy plant growth. Dr Teague explained that BARE SOIL exposed to direct sunlight, will reach a temperature of up to 60°C, killing micro life and fine plant root hairs in the top layer of soil, negatively effecting water penetration and plant growth. On the other hand, soil covered with grass, will only reach 30°C under the same conditions, with none of the above harmful consequences.

I'd like to hear an objective expert's view on the effect of this in a NO TILL system with ROUND UP READY MAIZE, where the inter-row is exposed.

Incidentally Dr. Teague's grazing management recommendations were closely aligned to Allan Savoury's "high impact short duration" grazing.

SOIL LIFE

Traditionally the quantity of CHICKEN LITTER applied has been calculated to meet the nutrient requirements of crops, but even applications well under this do seemingly have very positive results. I can only attribute this to the stimulation of soil life which in turn would enhance plant nutrient uptake.

It would be interesting to note the effect of 1ton CHICKEN LITTER/ha supplemented with chemical fertilizers, to meet the plants nutrient requirements.

AUTUMN FERTILIZING

It's time to prepare your garden for autumn/winter.

COMPOST one can apply at any time, but try to do it once a year.

GROMOR COMPOST 1 x 30dm³ bag applied to 5m²-10m². Apply it as a topdressing on lawns* whilst in other areas sprinkle it between plants and scratch it in lightly. (*Even better **GROMOR LAWN DRESSING** which is pre-enriched)

GROMOR ACCELERATOR ORGANIC FERTILIZER PELLETS can be applied together with compost or separately at 150g/m². Unfortunately, it does smell when applied as a topdressing and dogs love sniffing and rolling in it! Dig it in where possible - NOTHING should be planted without GROMOR COMPOST and ACCELERATOR. As an alternative to ACCELERATOR on lawns, one can apply **GROMOR 5.1.5(28)** at 50g/m² where clippings have been removed or **GROMOR 4.1.1(21)** at 50g/m² where clippings have NOT been removed.

TUNNELS

The very hot, dry and dusty summer conditions have not made for easy Tunnel farming, especially where no side vents and shade netting are in place to keep the tunnels cooler.

It's very easy to forget the basics, especially in difficult times.

1. Light is essential for photosynthesis, so don't let Tunnel covering get dirty and dusty.
2. Unlike most humans, plants "wake up" about half an hour before sunrise. Ensure that feeding/irrigation starts then. (At the Jockey Academy at Summerveld the apprentice jockeys and supervisors get up at 3am on early mornings and 4am on late mornings!)
3. Adjust the irrigation schedule and quantity applied to allow for 10% runoff (20% if your water quality is poor) so as to prevent a build-up of EC to levels that will negatively affect growth.
4. To my mind **GROMOR NEW GENERATION COASTAL BLEND** and **GROMOR CALMAG N + TE** at 1g/l each as we formulated back in Erwin Smith's days, remain the best value for money water soluble fertilizers.

INTENSIVE GROWING

By 2017 the Japanese firm Spread, plans to grow 30 000 heads of lettuce a day with an entire staff of robots, which will chop personnel costs by about half and energy by a third. Spread's indoor farm currently produces 21 000 heads of lettuce a day, using a small human staff contingent supported by robotics.

The new Spread farm, will be ± 4 400m² in size and have floor to ceiling shelves, where the produce will be grown using the vertical farming system with LED lights.

Don't forget **THE BI- ANNUAL INTENSIVE GROWERS ASSOCIATION SYMPOSIUM AT CEDARA ON THE 17th MARCH 2016**. For further details, contact the association secretary.

Johan van Veenendal at iga@sai.co.za, cellphone: 082 653 0365 and e-mail/fax: 086 698 2354

The keynote speaker will be the renowned South African expert on water, Tony Turton.

GROMOR PRODUCTS

Whilst I do tend to concentrate on our faster moving lines sold in 10l and 30l bags in the monthly newsletters, we do also have a number of other products, some of which are listed below, many in 50dm³ wire tied bags, which are popular with commercial growers.

GROMOR POTTING MEDIA is a pre-enriched composted pinebark media which has a slightly better water holding capacity than GROWING MEDIA and is therefore better suited for use in smaller pots. For larger containers and bags and where irrigation management is strictly regulated, I would recommend the better drained **GROMOR GROWING MEDIA**, which is also pre-enriched.

GROMOR ACID DRESSING does require a fairly heavy application to do the job. Adjusting pH, as an acid dressing is required to do, is always tricky. I would suggest trying it on a small section first. Apply 10l ACID DRESSING per 1m², spread around the "acid loving" plant and scratched it lightly into the soil. Cover with **GROMOR PINEBARK MULCH** for optimum results.

Regards,

GROMOR (PTY) LTD

R. HAGEN

PS: True Story from my Chemist. A woman phones in sounding desperate. "My young son has just swallowed half a box of my Oral Contraceptives! What will happen to him?!!" The Chemist replies - "well, he definitely won't fall pregnant" Needless to say the woman did not find it funny.

A guy asks a girl in the library. "do you mind if I sit in this seat beside you?" to this the girl replies in a loud voice. "I DO NOT WANT TO SPEND THE NIGHT WITH YOU!!" All the students in the library start staring in shock at the guy. Shortly thereafter the girl walks slowly over to the guy's table and whispers to him. "I study psychology and know what a man is thinking. I guess you felt embarrassed?" To this the guy replies, "R1000 FOR ONE NIGHT - THAT'S TOO MUCH!"

The people in the library now stare at the girl in shocked surprise, whilst the guy whispers in her ear - "I study law and have learned to make someone feel guilty!"