



Case Study

HORTICULTURE—CYCLAMEN & POINSETTIAS

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Two trials were selected for ascertaining the efficacy of utilising Plocher products in horticulture. 50% of each crop used Plocher products and 50% was treated with Trichoderma and Mycorrhizae mixtures.

Treatment

TRIAL 1: Cyclamen

Growing media: potted

Protocol: Plocher Soil Activator 1, 2 & 3 (AK 1750) at 200g/ha two weeks post planting, applied through irrigation lines and Plant Strengthener (AP 3071) at 300ml/ha for three weeks weekly as a foliar treatment

TRIAL 2: Poinsettia

Growing media: potted

Protocol: Weeks 1-3—Plocher Plant Strengthener (AP 3071) at 300ml/ha weekly for three weeks as a systemic application; Weeks 4-6—Plocher Plant Vitaliser (AP 3352) at 200g/ha weekly for three weeks as a foliar application; Weeks 7-9—Plocher Plant Protector (AP 3252) at 200g/ha weekly for three weeks as a foliar application

Results

TRIAL 1: Application method left a small residue on leaves

Seedlings were very delicate and the crop grew away well

Growth period 1, Initiation: T & M 4% ahead of Plocher

Growth period 2, Leaf Production: Plocher 7% ahead of T & M

Growth period 3, First Flower: Plocher 14% ahead of T & M

Growth period 4, Pre-Market: Plocher 6% bigger, 5% more flower cover and 7% larger

Crop Loss: Plocher 4%; T & M 3%; Conventional 6%

TRIAL 2: Poinsettias do not react well to spraying making application method a concern. Seedlings were very delicate and the crop grew away well
Growth period 1: No difference
Growth period 2: Some scorch on leaves, 2% increase over conventional
Growth period 3: Plocher-treated plants reacted best to high humidity, 3% increase, healthier leaf and stem growth than conventional and T & M

Conclusion

Both sites showed an overall improvement with the use of Plocher products, however application of the products was only recommended as a six week establishment programme within the growth cycle in order to introduce the product range to growers.

Cyclamen had the best results, despite having the shortest regime. Plocher Soil Activator 1, 2 & 3 enhanced the fertility of the soil so that plants settled and grew away more quickly. Plocher Plant Products were used to support and stimulate top growth. Had the use of this product continued, the crop may have produced even better results.

The Poinsettia trial used the longest Plocher Plant Product programme, but did not use Plocher Soil Activator 1, 2 & 3. It showed good results in the longer term, but it is likely it would have produced earlier and better improvements if the recommended protocol had been used.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Both trials would have benefited from an earlier application of Plocher Soil Activator 1, 2 & 3. Ideally, this should be applied to compost prior to planting or in the drench immediately after planting, to allow for aerobic microbial activity to be activated and to optimise soil hygiene and fertility. Research shows that this considerably improves root growth which will support leaf, stem and basal growth as well as stimulate flower and bract production. Applications should be repeated if soil borne pests and disease persist, to cleanse the soil.

Plant growth is stimulated by Plocher Plant Strengthener, and had application been continued at regular intervals through the growing season, growers are likely to have seen further improvements in plant growth and quality, and, as a result, fewer applications of Plocher Plant Vitaliser and Plocher Plant Protector to protect from mildew and pests and disease would be required because plants are healthier and able to resist and grow through attacks.

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