Wetting Instruction Blocks

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Initial wetting of blocks on the sowing or pricking out line

The initial wetting of propagating blocks is crucial to the success of the propagation process. It forms the foundation for the root development and growth of tomato, sweet pepper and aubergine plants. This also applies to cucumber plants that are sown directly in the blocks. The propagation blocks we have supplied you with have been produced with the greatest care. To guarantee successful use, it is essential that you follow these instructions.

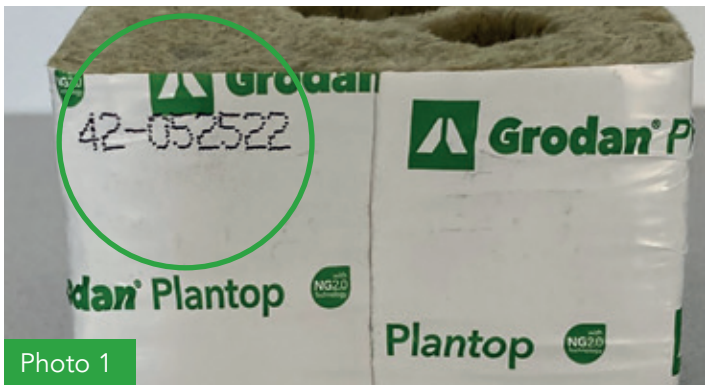

Photo 1

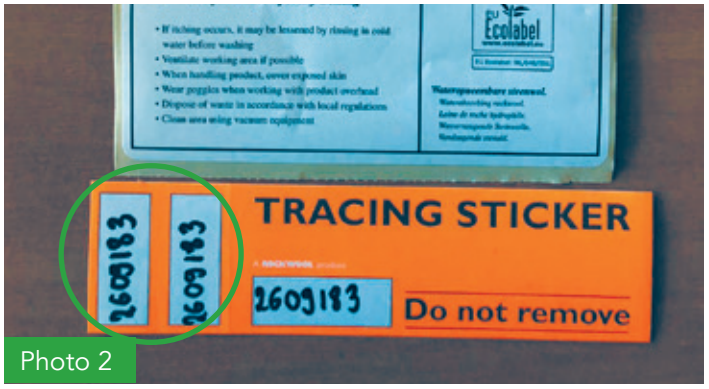

Photo 2

1. Registration before use

- Note the retrieval code(s) stated on the blocks you intend to use (see photo 1 and 2). This code is printed on the block or the orange sticker on a block at the top of the pallet.
- Save 5 blocks of each retrieval code in a separate place. Register the corresponding retrieval code for the 5 blocks. Repeat this procedure each time you use a new pallet.

You will need this information should you have any questions about the blocks at a later stage. We cannot answer your queries without this information.

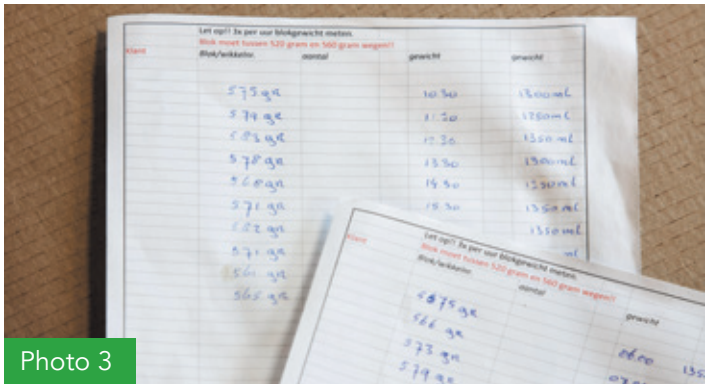

Photo 3

- Make a pricking our list for each customer (see photo)
- Note the retrieval codes of the blocks used for this customer on the pricking out list.
- Weigh the blocks at regular intervals (see weighing instructions point 6)

Photo 4

2. Checking the water absorption of the blocks

- To ensure the blocks absorb sufficient water and nutrients on the wetting line, we recommended breaking open a few blocks (3), this is the best way to check if the blocks are fully saturated. The end control should be done by weighing the blocks on a scale.
- This should be done using several blocks after they have been treated on the wetting line or in various places in a section of the greenhouse. Full saturation of the blocks is essential, as the requirements of the young plants (tomato, pepper, aubergine, courgette,) pricked out into the blocks, or the cucumbers sown in the blocks, must be satisfied.

In case block weights deviate from recommended values, action needs to be undertaken before sowing or transplanting can take place. See table below for recommended values:

Block type	Block volume	Min. volume of water per block	Min. weight per block in wet condition
10 x 10 x 6.5 cm	650 cc	1.5 liter	550 grams
10 x 10 x 7.5 cm	750 cc	1.8 liter	630 grams
15 x 10 x 6.5 cm	975 cc	2.3 liter	830 grams

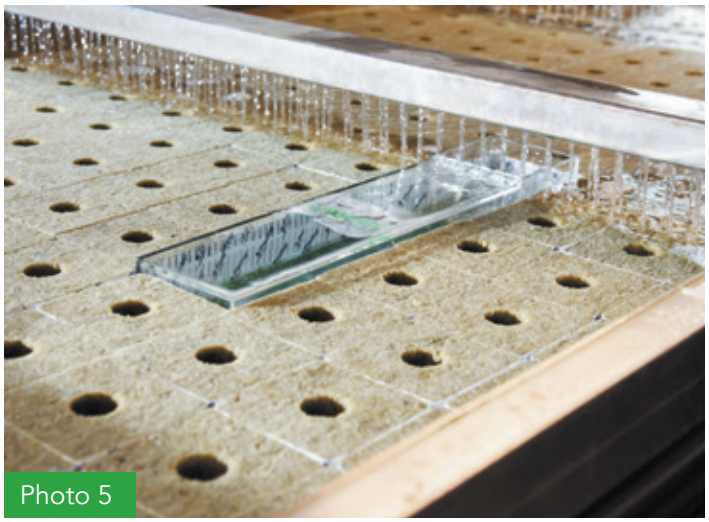

Photo 5

3. Placing the blocks on the wetting line

- The container used to check saturation must be positioned on the wetting line at the place where 5 x 10*10 blocks would normally be placed.
- The opening must face upwards and no objects must be placed in the container. The water from the spray bars will flow into the opening of the container.

The opening in the container must have the same dimensions as the 10*10*6.5 block. This means it will receive exactly the same volume of water as would normally be sprayed onto a block with the same dimensions. The reservoir, with the dimensions of the four other blocks, fills with this water. The indication on the side of the container allows you to check how much water has been sprayed onto the 'block'.

Photo 6

4. Placing the blocks on the line

- Place the blocks with the grooves running widthways across the belt on the wetting line. Excess water can drain from the line at the side.
- A wetting line with a so-called open-belt encourages the easy absorption of water.
- A wetting line is the most efficient way to saturate the blocks. All the water used in this process is absorbed by the blocks, any excess water drains away and is re-used.

Photo 7

5. Water supply and belt speed

- Ensure there is sufficient water to saturate the blocks, particularly when re-starting the line after a brief idle period.
- Do not set the water pressure too high. A lower pressure will gently saturate the blocks, and the excess water will drain away.
- To prevent air becoming trapped in the block, ensure water can easily drain away at the bottom of the block. This will avoid differences in the water content and EC in the blocks
- Do not set the belt speed too high. A slow speed encourages good water absorption.
- Check the spray bar regularly for blockages, otherwise some blocks may be left partially or completely dry.

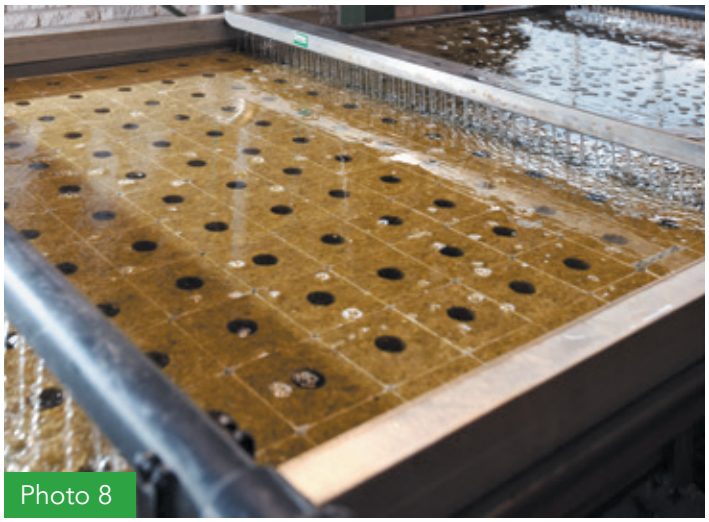

Photo 8

6. Spray bars

- A wetting line usually has minimally 3 spray bars
- The distance between the spray bars must be sufficiently large, minimum 50 cm, otherwise good water absorption cannot be guaranteed.
- 1st spray bar: The fibres are activated for the 1st absorption of water
- 2nd spray bar: The block becomes fully saturated when the correct belt speed is used, water is gradually sucked through the block. This creates a so-called 'dynamic flow'.
- 3rd spray bar: The water content of the block is optimised during the final water absorption. This creates a uniform water content and uniform EC distribution in the block.

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