

## **Pest Control and Production Systems for Liner Production**

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### **VINE WEEVIL CONTROL**

Since withdrawal of approval for the pesticide Aldrin, 10 years ago, life has been difficult and expensive. It is not acceptable to supply vine-weevil-infested liners, so on this nursery controlling vine weevil takes top priority, with a strict hygiene programme on the nursery combined with the latest chemical controls. In the view of this author, pesticides as toxic as Aldrin are inappropriate for liner production in any case, because of the dangers associated with application of such chemicals, handling plants afterwards, and the safety of workers and customers.

The nursery has also experienced problems with pesticides introduced as Aldrin replacements, for example, poor control (promises of a miracle product which isn't always the case), damage to crops, and high purchase cost.

In the last 2 years, the most promising development in vine weevil control has been the introduction of nematodes. All liners on this nursery will be treated with nematodes in Autumn 1996 and again in Spring 1997 at a cost of approximately £4000. Good results have been achieved by some other nurseries and at last there may be a good method for the control of vine weevil at an affordable cost. The author looks forward to reporting back to interested members when our results are available in June 1997.

### **PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT AT L&K DUNNE NURSERIES**

The nursery produces 120,000 cuttings per week. This has been made possible because of an efficient system which has been built up over the years and the availability of highly skilled people who we have trained ourselves, aided by summer students aged between 15 and 22 years. Attention to detail right through the production cycle is vital for success. Among the most important points are:

- Type of worker — honest, hardworking, and willing to learn.
- Quality and evenness of cuttings.
- Quality of work.
- General good planning and organisation in advance.
- In order to achieve maximum results each year, good records of previous years are a must. This gives an ability to adapt to and overcome changes such as different weather conditions and other problems that arise in production.
- Good planning is essential to optimise use of modern machinery, material and technology.

The 10 most important elements of the management system at L&K Dunne are:

- Organisation and planning.
- Quality cuttings stored in a cooler at 3C.
- Good team work.
- Good compost. We use Bord na Mona blended Irish peat (70% 6 to 12 mm, 10% 6- to 12-mm peat nuggets, 20% 0- to 10-mm fine peat plus 10% granite grit).

- Insert cuttings as soon as possible.
- Check all cuttings 2 days after inserting for water and other problems and then every 3 days after that.
- Spray fungicide every 10 days.
- When rooted, harden off as soon as possible and preferably harden off at night or on dull days.
- Spray all cuttings with a suitable herbicide 2 weeks after hardening off.
- Tidiness and hygiene right through production.