

New Technical Sales Manager for the French speaking market

This week we caught up with Biogrow's new Technical Sales Manager Mickaël Renaud.

What was your background before joining Biogrow?

After completing my studies with a BTS in thermal and climate control installation, I decided to reorient myself towards training in the horticultural sector after working as a seasonal worker within a greenhouse.

Thanks to this experience, I realized that this work was more in line with what suits me. My family comes from an agricultural background, so I can say that today, with hindsight, this change of direction was an obvious one and it was the right choice.

After several years between my studies and my experiences as a seasonal horticultural worker, notably within the company "Serres des 3 Moulins," I obtained my BTS in Horticultural Production, as well as a permanent contract with the same company, holding the positions of team leader and PBI manager. With this first enriching experience in mind, and with no opportunity to move into a cultivation technician position, I decided to embark on a new adventure in the south of France within the company Vila.

Despite my lack of experience in crop management, the company trusted me to join them as a crop manager, initially for strawberries, then for tomatoes. I stayed with the company for seven years, which were very formative for the young person I was at the time and who wanted to move forward and grow toward a position of responsibility. Thanks to the trust of my managers, I was able to achieve my goals of managing my crops and staff, with complete autonomy.

Completely fulfilled in my work, I nevertheless decided to return to my home region, knowing that I was going to be a father. With this valuable experience, I progressed as a head grower in tomatoes and cucumbers and worked for 18 years at two establishments in the Nantes region.



Why did you want to join our company?

After more than 20 years as a Head Grower, I wanted to take my career in a new direction and move toward a new challenge, which would allow me to use my many years of experience as a crop technician.

My technical background was sought after within Biogrow. So, for me, joining Biogrow was a given, as I knew the company and the people who work there through my earlier experience with the Vila Group.

Furthermore, Biogrow's commitment to more sustainable and responsible agriculture is in line with my values today. By offering a range of renewable and recyclable products, this pioneering company is fully aligned with the more environmentally friendly agriculture of tomorrow. Biogrow has extensive international experience in providing quality services to producers through its substrate production at factories in Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, and Brazil.

Read the full article on the Biogrow website.

"With an annual volume of approximately 1.1 million m³, coco is the second most popular raw material for potting soil. Here too, the unpredictability of the rainy season presents challenges in production and availability."

Raw material shortage in the potting soil and substrate sector

The availability of key raw materials such as peat and coir (coconut fibre) for the Western European substrate market is at a historic low. The main causes are poor weather in the peat and coir production areas. In addition, the rapidly growing global demand for these raw materials, particularly from Asia, is also reducing their availability for Western Europe. These developments pose significant challenges for the Dutch substrate market in the coming year.

Due to the poor weather with heavy rainfall in the Baltic States, Finland, and Sweden between May and July 2025, peat production is stuck at a harvest rate of between 40 and 50%. White peat production presents the greatest challenge, with a harvest rate of between 25 and 35%.

For many substrate companies, the Baltic States, Finland and Sweden are the most important peat production areas. Peat production must take place during the summer months when the weather is dry. With an annual consumption of approximately 4 million m³ of peat, out of a substrate production of 7.5 million m³, peat is by far the most commonly used raw material in the Netherlands.

With an annual volume of approximately 1.1 million m³, coco is the second most popular raw material for potting soil. Here too, the unpredictability of the rainy season presents challenges in production and availability.



In addition to the more limited availability of important raw materials such as coco and peat, the demand for renewable raw materials such as bark, wood fiber and compost is also increasing. The available volumes of sufficient quality of other new renewable raw materials (cultivated plant fibers etc.) are, however, still limited in the short term and these cannot certainly replace the volumes of peat.

Global demand for substrate raw materials is rising extremely fast with a growing world population, the demand for food will continue to increase. People are living more in urban areas, and the focus on green, livable cities is becoming increasingly important. Substrates are essential for responsible food production and for green, livable cities. Based on earlier research by the WUR (Wageningen University), a growth in the demand for substrates of 400% was predicted in 2050 compared to 2020.

Meanwhile, in China, the area of covered cultivation has grown from 700,000 to 3,000,000 hectares in just five years. The enormous demand from China is therefore already having a significant impact on the international raw material market for substrates.

It is therefore necessary for the European horticulture and substrate sectors to fundamentally reconsider a (new) strategic position regarding raw materials for substrates. The current global geopolitical climate makes this essential.

The markets for raw materials are currently under great pressure and are partly still unpredictable. Raw materials and other materials are difficult to obtain, sometimes unavailable or only at high prices. Peat production may catch up in the period up to the end of August, although the backlog will certainly not be fully recovered.

Source : Press release on raw material shortages from the **Association of Potting Soil and Substrate Manufacturers the Netherlands**



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"By using hydrogen peroxide to inhibit biofilm formation, we can eradicate these conducive conditions for Agrobacterium disease. "

Agrobacterium (hairy root disease)

During my visits, growers shared with me some of the problems they encounter- particularly with *Agrobacterium rhizogenes* (Hairy Root disease) in tomatoes. Based on both my experience and the grower feedback I've received, the use of hydrogen peroxide to disrupt biofilm formation is an essential strategy for *Agrobacterium* control. Biofilm within the irrigation system creates a sheltered environment for bacterial colonies to establish and multiply. By using hydrogen peroxide to inhibit biofilm formation, we can eradicate these conducive conditions for *Agrobacterium* disease. This has proved to be very effective in reducing its presence.

Effective control requires ongoing treatments throughout the growing cycle, with higher doses used for crop rotations. Hydrogen peroxide can also be used on eggplant and cucumber; crops that are particularly sensitive to this phenomenon. Strawberry growers, who don't change their irrigation system every year, also use hydrogen peroxide. A stabilized hydrogen peroxide treatment will dissolve microbial colonies and oxidize organic matter, detaching the material from surfaces within the irrigation system. This material can then be flushed out of the system via the network purge valves - Mickaël RENAUD.



News in brief:

- Protec training centre installs custom Hyperfarm fertigation unit. Follow the Protec training centre updates on the Biogrow India LinkedIn page.



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When : 13th-16th November 2025

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