



City of Oudenaarde recycles old potting soil

New opportunities thanks to TerraCottem[®] Complement

Every spring and summer Oudenaarde's city centre is covered in flowers. This flower fest with thousands of annuals embellishing parks, squares and road medians is a pleasure to the eye for both the inhabitants of this historical city and its growing number of visitors. The city's consistent effort to improve quality and beauty has been amply rewarded. Oudenaarde has been bestowed with titles such as Best Flowered City, Silver Award at Entente Florale, etc.

Potting soil with TerraCottem[®]

For many years, the horticultural department at Oudenaarde has been using potting soil ameliorated with *TerraCottem[®]* to plant up its flower baskets, tiered planters and barrier baskets, building up a good track-record. Consequently, the extension of TerraCottem's range of products seemed promising to Oudenaarde the more so as TerraCottem expressed the intention of setting up a number of field trials in 2009 (see further).

Two new products

Apart from the already known *TerraCottem[®]*, which is now commercialised as *TerraCottem[®] Universal*, two new derivative products have been developed: *TerraCottem[®] Turf* to further enhance the quality of the sward and *TerraCottem[®] Complement* for applications where *TerraCottem[®] Universal* has been used previously.

TerraCottem[®] Complement

TerraCottem[®] Complement has been designed to replenish only those components that have been consumed by the plants during the previous growing season and that have been removed during harvesting. Due to its application the nutrient and water holding capacity of soils and growing media is kept in optimal conditions. Root development and plant growth are improved, as well as the structure and performance of soils and growing media.

This soil conditioning technology is the result of a scientifically balanced composition consisting of more than 20 different substances, based on:

- 7.50% of different acrylamide and acrylic acid copolymers with potassium salt and ammonium salt;
- 10.50% of a balanced mixture of soluble, slow release and synthetic nitrogen fertilisers;
- 0.25% of growth precursors and
- 81.75% of volcanic rock

Its application is straight forward: just mix it homogeneously into the root zone or growing medium prior to planting.

Trial

Oudenaarde's Horticultural Department is aware that *TerraCottem® Universal* is still active in the potting soil after the first growing season. That is why they recycled the "old" 2008 potting soil as an amendment for the annual beds (*Begonia*, *Tagetes* and *Salvia*). A number of trial locations were carefully selected throughout the city. The trial was set up between the end of May and beginning of June 2009:

- control areas (without the addition of either the recycled potting soil or *TerraCottem® Complement*),
- areas with only the recycled potting soil
- areas with the recycled potting soil and *TerraCottem® Complement*.

The amendments have been mixed into the soil either manually or mechanically. All beds have been watered after planting them up. However, there have been very few irrigation rounds during the trial period despite the climate data from the Belgian Royal Meteorological Institute indicating that Oudenaarde had abnormal high temperatures and low rainfall (40% less than normal) during these months. Pictures of the trial areas were taken at regular intervals.

Results

The positive impact on plant growth of the application of the recycled potting soil in combination with *TerraCottem® Complement* was clearly visible after just a couple of weeks. Bigger flowers with more blooms lead to a denser and uniform outgrowth of the flower beds. Despite the extreme climatic circumstances such as high temperatures and little rainfall, the usual irrigation frequency has been maintained. Additionally, a substantial extension of the flowering season has been recorded.



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Trials Tacambaro parking
(5 months after planting)
Left: recycled TCU-potting soil +
TerraCottem® Complement;
Right: control



■ ■ ■ ■
Trials Tacambaro park
Left: recycled TCU-potting soil +
TerraCottem® Complement
Right: control;



■ ■ ■ ■
Trials Minderbroeder square
Left: recycled TCU potting soil +
TerraCottem® Complement
Right: control

Conclusions

The results clearly demonstrate the added value of *TerraCottem's* new product. By combining old recycled potting soil (containing *TerraCottem® Universal*) with *TerraCottem Complement®* flower beds flourish right until the end of the season.

Text

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