

J & A Growers Ltd

Nursery Blog - October 2014

Welcome to a third edition of our Nursery Blog. I hope that you enjoy reading this, as we take a last gasp before the harvest begins. It has been so pleasant to have the sun upon our backs throughout most of September, but fear we will pay for it once there is a change in weather. What a good growing summer it has been and this is reflected in the crops. As always there is an open invitation to come and view our production, but please with prior notice.

Egedal demo day, Denmark (25 September)

This event was hosted by Hojgard nursery in Denmark and was attended by around 250 nurserymen from 11 different countries. It showed off a magnificent nursery, farming some prime sandy soil that almost all would envy. There were many working demonstrations of relevant Egedal machines and time to discuss with the manufacturers, operators and fellow nurserymen. There was also a working demonstration of a CultiClean heat sterilisation machine, with a gas powered flame blasting through the top layer of soil as it passed over a rotivator. This process was boasting a 70-80% success rate on controlling weed seeds by either instantly killing or promoting rapid germination which can be sprayed prior to sowing.



*CultiClean heat
sterilising machine*

Soil sterilisation study tour to Italy (10-11 September)

With the knowledge that Basamid is unlikely to be around forever and within the next two years will almost certainly need covering with plastic following application, it is a good time to re-assess our practices. With the availability of some RDPE funding to help cover the cost of a training visit, it was decided that HDC should take advantage of this and Italy was a good place to look at research and findings so far.

The first day of the tour was spent at the CeRSAA research station and visiting local growers, which gave a good platform for gaining knowledge of the pros and cons of the different chemicals and processes on offer at this point in time. The second day was spent with Forigo who manufacture rotivators with liquid and granular type applicators attached and the option of a polylayer covering behind in the same pass. The trip was attended by representatives from six UK nurseries with similar aims in mind. To summarise the findings, there is no single product currently available which will answer

our prayers. Products such as Chloropicrin can offer good control as a Nematicide and Fungicide but has a down side, giving poor control on weed seeds and can only be applied through registered operators (of which there is one in the UK). Other products on the horizon are DMDS (Dimetil Disulfide) and AITC (Allylisotiocyante) but again aren't looking very promising on weed control and release terrible odours following application.

Unfortunately we got lost on the way back to the airport and ended up in Monaco. We tried asking for directions at the local Casino, but they wouldn't let us in for some reason!!!!



Nursery Machinery web site

Just a gentle reminder of the nursery machinery web site (www.nurserymachines.com), set up to link buyers and sellers of relevant horticultural machines. If you haven't already registered for automatic notification through weekly updates, then please visit the site and subscribe now. Remember it is still currently FREE to list any unused machinery you would like to sell.



*Dewitte sand spreader,
One of the recent listings*

Outlook

The Four Oaks trade show had a very positive feel this year with the expectation of a busy winter ahead for the Landscape sector. Unfortunately, this wasn't mirrored at the APF forestry show where there was much uncertainty, generated through the disrupted grant funding system. It is still unknown what level of impact will show on this planting season and more worryingly in 2015/16, as a date has not yet been released for the opening of the next round of Woodland Creation Grants and we know through experience there is a substantial lead time between the first applications being submitted and grant approval being given.

Oak seed is once again a hot topic as there is a very poor harvestable crop showing and expect the squirrels to claim first rights to that. Forestart have invested in a purpose built Oak store (for storing seed up to one year) as part of their new facilities, but unfortunately won't get to fill it this winter. We have recently sowed some stored Oak seed in our own trials to assess its viability in an open ground situation following storage and to see how the seedlings emerge and survive through the winter following a very short growing season.

Recent shots of the nursery



Quercus Robur seedlings



Alnus Glutinosa seedlings