

Matrix Crop report – Week#11 Belgium, March 10th, 2003

February was the sunniest period of the last ten years. There were several days with more than 1000 J. This trend continued in March, with the odd rainy day here and there. The crops were grateful for this: there is speed in the plants but the fruit load might be felt should the light disappear.

It is therefore important that we continue to work on power with a generative variety such as Matrix and that we maintain speed as well. Do not use a pre-night to work on fruit. Fruits should mature quickly so that the fruit load is not increased unnecessarily. Reducing speed and increasing fruit size will go at the expense of growth shortly and this will increase the risk of square fruit and also leaf necrosis should we run into darker weather.

In other words, Day/Night temperature difference can be small, no increases on light during the day, and venting close to the heating target (+0.5°C).

However, make sure that on sunny days we do not vent too much during the early morning hours and bring cold air into the greenhouse. This could lead to Botrytis. Crops with a somewhat lighter color are more susceptible to Botrytis. One option is to vent at 1°C above the heating setpoint during this period and to adjust the P-band (4 to 5) so that the vents open slower in the morning.

The first whiteflies have been seen already. Those who have already introduced *Macrolophus* have noticed that the establishment was good (probably as a result of the good weather).