

Matrix Crop Report – Week #17
Belgium April 21st, 2004

Although the crops have improved nicely in the last few weeks, there are still some greenhouses where the plant heads are still a bit thin. It is therefore important to work on speed and not on size.

Keep the following points in mind:

- Maintain a high enough night temperature, at least 17°C. A lower night temperature slows down the ripening. Keep a vegetative temperature regime (not too much difference between day and night set points).
- Maintain a minimum pipe temperature of 45°C to keep the plants active and have a reduction on light of 5°C maximum, so that the pipe temperature is always warm enough to have a good ripening speed. If the pipe temperature is too low, fruits stay on the plants too long and the plant charge continues to increase.
- Another method to keep enough vigor in the heads is to eliminate nearly all increases on light. Only when the weather is cool can the ventilation temperature be increased by 1°C. This will also reduce the risk of cold heads. With mild weather, the increase can be put at 0 again so that a humid and stagnant climate can be avoided.

Although Matrix has an open plant habit, it is susceptible to Botrytis. This has a lot to do with the pale color of the plant. Keep the following points in mind:

- Lower 24-hr temperatures increase the susceptibility. Make sure that the climate is 'active', and a minimum pipe is important.
- Cutting leaves is better than breaking leaves.
- The leaves of Matrix can be rather brittle. Keep this in mind when going through the crop with carts because damaged leaves are a good source of infection. Leaves with necrotic spots are more susceptible as well. Keep up with deleafing. At least two clusters should be exposed (this will also speed up ripening and thus plant vigor)
- Inspect the crop regularly for infected spots.
- Cut out the infected stem parts and remove these from the greenhouse. This will prevent the distribution of millions of spores.
- Be on guard if many leaves are taken off at once and left between the pipes to dry. If there are water puddles on the plastic groundcover, leaves will rot instead of dry up. It is better to remove two leaves at one time and do an extra round. Fewer leaves in the path will dry quicker.

In closing: prevent Botrytis by avoiding large changes or fluctuations in plants, climate and plant maintenance.

To avoid kinked clusters, continue to use cluster supports.