

QUEST February 5, 2002

The late plantings of early January have now been put on the hole and had some nice weather this past week. The plants have grown well but have become a bit heavy. Steering generatively is therefore the key message. The irrigation strategy may have been the cause of this type of plant. We had 24-hr temperatures of about 20°C, mild outside temperatures, a good >growing climate= and warm roots. The result is that when the weather turns to mild and cloudy, the roots stay warm and easily pump water to the top. The plants become paler and transpire more, and the humidity will therefore increase so that there will be more venting. The message is: STOP IN TIME WITH WATERING, at about 14.30 hrs. If you continue with watering, it will be more difficult to get the plant dark. Drip at about 3.2 EC and when the slab EC rises, use longer irrigation turns. (See also previous information). Extend the day temperature if the plant is not dark enough. Pay attention to venting. Only when the temperature is above 9 to 10°C can you start venting. It is better to work with a minimum crack of, for instance, 3% to maintain an active climate and ensure adequate humidity exchange (the latter applies especially to new greenhouses and earlier sowings).

Cluster pruning: from now on everything can be pruned to 4. For those who did not know it yet: with Quest we do not keep on extra stems. Those who planted at 60 cm can consider having a few clusters of 5 later in the crop. Those who planted closer should not forget to remove extra leaves.

For optimal light penetration into the crop as well as making the plant generative, it is advisable to start deleafing early. This will stimulate sizing of the fruits and will simplify the work:

- X while the first cluster is flowering, remove the first three leaves
- X with the first sowings (Nov.1), leaves may have been removed up to the first truss

The early sowings (4th to 5th cluster flowering) have already nice tomatoes. Here we must be careful with high temperatures because of the risk of hollow fruit and BER:

- X reduce the light increase when sunny (to about 0.5 to 1°C), preferably have it only on the venting temperature (to +1 to 2°C)
- X watch out for high pipe temperatures (reduce 5 to 10°C), put the maximum at about 70°C
- X stop now with drying out the slabs, the basis for a good root system must have been laid by now.