



Big Gothic Greenhouse

Build Your Own GOTHIC Greenhouse



Seven years ago, I was about to give it all up - gardening, I mean. Here in the Colorado Mountains the sunlight is too harsh, the season too short and the winters too cold. Using the simple structures described in my article, *Gardening in the Fall and Winter*, I was able to grow a limited number and range of produce. But it was not enough. I wanted a real vegetable garden with red ripe tomatoes and tall rows of peas. The answer had to be some sort of greenhouse or protective structure. The problem is, I prefer to make things myself - and I keep to a very tight gardening budget.

Old Greenhouse

There followed a couple of years of experimentation, building growing structures from low cost, easily available materials. I started with a rounded hoop house made from 3/4-inch PVC pipe. The plans I found on the web were well designed and easy to follow, so I glued up the plastic joints and covered it with standard four micrometers thick transparent poly sheeting. It looked sturdy. I particularly appreciated the simplicity of the foundation; the PVC ribs slipped over two foot lengths of 1/2-inch rebar hammered into the ground.

The snows that winter were heavy. I spent a number of sleepless nights with a broom pushing snow off the top of the structure, trying to lighten the load on the hoops. Spring roared in with wind gusting around 80 mph. A loud scrunching noise was heard and the greenhouse collapsed into a tangle of broken pipe and pierced sheeting. The only positive that came out of the snowfall was that the simple foundation held the hoop house solidly to the earth.

The answer seemed to be, make it stronger. Bending 1/2-inch metal conduit into semicircular ribs was tricky, but two trees growing close together came to my assistance. I drew a template on the ground and bent each rib to shape, using the gap between the trees and gentle even pressure. A piece of 1/2-inch copper tubing fit tightly into the 1/2-inch conduit to serve as a jointing method.



Slip Connector

The main technical problem plaguing me was connecting the crossies to the ribs without drilling and bolting each one - a horribly tedious process. After wandering around my local hardware store handling all the odds and ends, I came up with a solution. Using four standard metal pipe straps with nuts and bolts, I fashioned a slip connector that could be moved around and then tightened into place (*see picture above*).

The new hoop house looked even more robust. Still, it could not stand up to a full scale Colorado blizzard the next winter.

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I calculated that the poor structure was trying to hold up about half a ton of snow on its broad back – about the same weight as my old Ford truck.

Obviously, I needed a shape that could shed snow easily and withstand strong winds. But why reinvent the wheel? The Victorians designing the glass greenhouse in my grandmother’s kitchen garden in Wales had solved those problems 125 years ago. They knew the gothic arch shape with its pointed ridge and curved sides was incredibly strong and resilient.

I found a company online called gothicarchgreenhouses.com and studied their pictures. Their greenhouses looked beautiful and functional but they were more expensive than my limited budget allowed. I just needed to solve a few technical problems: how to connect the ribs at the top, what to do about a ridgepole and how to construct an end wall and doorway.



Ridge Connector

After a few more experiments, it came together. Using ribs made of 3/4-inch galvanized conduit, the ends fit tightly into 3/4-inch 90° galvanized iron fittings, the kind used for gas piping. This created a sharp ridge that could be covered by 1 1/2-inch PVC pipe with notches cut to hold the iron elbows (see picture above). The end walls were constructed out of standard two-foot by four-foot lumber with a used door from the local recycling yard, cut down to size.

To finish the structure, I ordered conventional six micrometers thick UV resistant polyethylene film from gothicarchgreenhouses.com. On past structures, I had tried different methods of fixing the plastic sheeting but I decided to splurge and get the wiggle wire installation



Recycled door

system. It proved to be the most expensive budget item but was well worth it in reducing the hassle of fixing or tightening the poly film. I attached two foot by four foot lumber along the walls using pipe clips, about 12 inches off the ground to hold the wiggle wire. That allowed the plastic to be rolled up to provide extra side venting on hot days.

The first prototype, a 10-foot x 12-foot greenhouse, still works well after five years (see picture on page 82). Two other 10-foot x 20-foot and 10-foot x 24-foot joined the collection over the next few years. According to my calculations, the final and largest structure cost me less



Wigglewire



Side plate

than \$350 complete. They stood up to the 2006 blizzard with 40 mph winds and six-foot snow drifts that locked us in our house for a week. Last winter, I harvested 12 different varieties of greens and salads October through February with temperatures below zero. The only heating method was 50 gallon plastic barrels of water used to capture the sun’s energy during the day that were released slowly at night.

Interest in this method of greenhouse building has spread through my community. I often have visitors asking how to make their own. A mountain friend has added a number of useful adaptations (see pictures on next page) with heavy-duty conduit, automatic-venting mechanisms on the tops of the end walls and a much simpler end wall structure and door. You can build your own gothic style greenhouse out of easily available materials and adapt the design to your skills and budget. Then you are ready for all year round growing.



Gothic greenhouse with heavy-duty conduit, automatic-venting mechanisms on the tops of the end walls and a much simpler end wall structure and door.

Close-up picture of the automatic-vent






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Picking peas inside the greenhouse

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RESOURCES Gothicarchgreenhouses.com



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↓ Build a Gothic Greenhouse ↓

CONSTRUCTING THE GOTHIC GREENHOUSE

Basic Materials List for a 10-foot x 20-foot greenhouse

- 18** - two-foot lengths of 1/2-inch rebar
- 18** - 10-foot lengths of 3/4-inch galvanized metal electrical conduit, standard or heavy duty
- six** - 10-foot lengths of 1/2-inch galvanized metal electrical conduit, standard or heavy duty
- nine** - 3/4-inch 90° galvanized iron elbows
- two** - 10-foot lengths 1 1/2-inch PVC piping
- 56** - 3/4-inch metal pipe straps
- 42** - 1/2-inch metal pipe straps
- one** - box of 3/4 inch #10 round head bolts
- one** - box of #10 washers
- one** - box of #10 nuts
- four** - 12-foot lengths of two-foot by four-foot lumber
- eight** - nine-foot lengths of wiggle wire base
- 12** - six-foot lengths of wiggle wire
- one** - box of 3/4-inch wide head screws
- 21-foot x 40-foot six micrometers thick polyethylene film
- Lumber and door to construct the end walls.

- Draw your plans before you start and adapt the materials list to your needs
- Choose a flat area that is approximately 10-feet by 20-feet. If possible, dig a 24-inch wide center pathway and sure up with 10-inch boards to create two raised beds, each approximately four feet wide.
- Measure and lay out the placement of the rebar every 30 inches (nine to a side) making sure it is square and

- straight. Hammer them into the ground for 15 inches leaving nine inches exposed.
- Make a template of the gothic arch shape on flat ground. The ribs are bent only in the middle four-foot leaving the last three feet of each end straight. Take care to bend slowly and evenly using a commercial bending machine, two trees or heavy barrels of water placed close together.
- Connect two rib ends together using the 90° elbows, hammered or screwed down tight. Place the connected ribs over two opposite rebars, easing them down carefully.
- When all the ribs are up in the air, attach the 1/2-inch conduit crossies using the connectors, one as close as possible to the top and one on each side about half way up the ribs.
- Attach the two-foot by four-foot side plates 12 inches off the ground using 3/4-inch pipe clips. Join the plates together in the middle with a screwed on two foot piece of two-foot by four-foot lumber.
- Build the two end walls out of two-foot by four-foot lumber with a door in one end. Drill and screw the last end ribs and crossies to the end walls
- Drill the wiggle wire base and attach to the wall plates and end walls using the wide head screws
- Cover the greenhouse with poly film, stretch it tight and attach with the wiggle wire worked into the bases. Make ventilators at the top of each end using plywood or Plexiglas and an automatic venting mechanism, if desired.



Fruits and Vegetables Just in Time for Fall

Buying according to season is the most cost-effective way to shop for groceries with the added benefit of enhanced flavor. As well, purchasing in-season fruits and vegetables are a sure way to get the highest level of nutrients, vitamins and anti-oxidants from your food.

The following is a list of what produce to look for this fall and how to test their quality.

Acorn Squash

- Look for blemish-free, dull green rind.
- Can keep up to two months.

Apples

- Choose firm, unblemished apples.

Butternut Squash

- Feel for top-heavy squash.
- Check skin for blemishes.

Cauliflower

- Look for tightly-packed florets.
- Check for yellow spots before buying.
- Keeps up to five days, refrigerated.

Figs

- Squeeze to test for firmness – not too soft, not hard.

Grapes

- Check for grapes to be plump and vibrant-colored.

Mushrooms

- Avoid blemished or dried out mushrooms.
- Store in paper bag for the right humidity.

Parsnips

- Shouldn't look withered or limp or have too many small roots.
- Can be stored up to four weeks in refrigerator.

Pears

- Find pears free of blemishes or bruises.

Pomegranate

- Whole pomegranates should feel heavier than they look.
- Can be stored up to three months in the fridge.

Pumpkin

- Pick a pumpkin with a tough skin that can't be scratched by your thumbnail.

Sweet Potatoes

- Avoid sweet potatoes with black spots.
- Make sure they're not shriveled.

Swiss Chard

- Leaves should be vibrant and green.
- Avoid wilted chard.

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Growing Food from Scraps Indoors

By Bonnie Burton

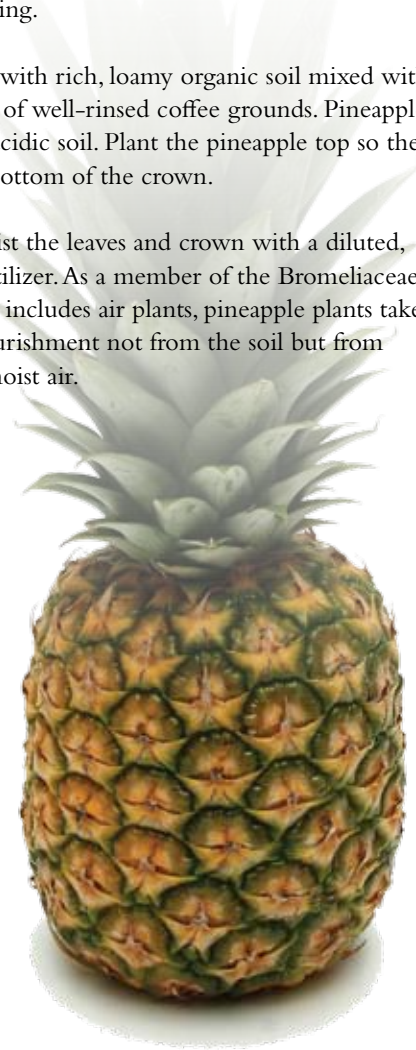
My indoor garden started with a royal flush: During a poker game with friends, I was halving an avocado for guacamole when I realized, to my complete shock, that I had a good hand. Instead of pausing the game to throw the pit in the trash, I poked a hole in the soil of the nearest houseplant, dropped in the pit and forgot about it. I was reminded a month later when the fast-growing avocado plant took over the pot. You, too, can grow an indoor garden with kitchen scraps usually thrown onto the compost heap.

Green Onions

1. Use green onions with healthy, white roots attached to the bulb. Snip off green tops for cooking with scissors. Leave a little green top on the onion bulb.
2. Plant the entire onion while leaving the short top above ground in a small pot filled with a loamy, organic potting soil. Make sure your container has drainage holes. Put in a sunny windowsill and water once a week or when soil feels dry to the touch.
3. Harvest new green shoots with scissors to use for cooking or as a tasty garnish. Continue to leave the onion in the soil. With each new growth the onion will taste more potent. After each harvest of onion tops, dress the topsoil with organic compost. Enjoy green onion tops in stir-fries, omelettes and in sandwiches all winter long.

Pineapple

1. Indoor pineapple plants rarely produce flowers and fruit, but their striking foliage adds a touch of the exotic to any houseplant collection. All you need to grow one is the green top you cut off when you eat the pineapple. For best results, use a pineapple that has fresh center leaves at the crown. Lob off the top, right where the crown meets the fruit. Peel off the bottom leaves and clean off the leftover fruit. Let the top rest a day before planting.
2. Fill a shallow pot with rich, loamy organic soil mixed with a few tablespoons of well-rinsed coffee grounds. Pineapple grows best in an acidic soil. Plant the pineapple top so the soil is even with the bottom of the crown.
3. Water well and mist the leaves and crown with a diluted, organic liquid fertilizer. As a member of the Bromeliaceae family, which also includes air plants, pineapple plants take much of their nourishment not from the soil but from nutrients in the moist air.



Avocado



1. For best results use only a ripe avocado. Carefully halve the fruit and rinse the pit. Pat dry and let sit overnight in a warm, dry spot. The next day, peel off any of the parchment-like skin from the pit.
2. Place the pit with the wider end of the base toward the bottom in a seven-inch pot full of loamy, rich organic soil. Make sure the tip is above the soil, exposed to light for proper germination. Water thoroughly.
3. If your apartment is dry, place a clear plastic cup over the exposed seed tip to serve as a mini-greenhouse. Though the plant does not need direct light to germinate, placing the pot on a sunny windowsill will speed up the growth.
4. Continue to water every week and make sure the soil doesn't dry out completely. The pit may take over a month to germinate so be patient.
5. When the sprout emerges and grows to about four inches, add another layer of organic soil to cover the pit completely. This not only protects the seed, but also any roots that may poke through the soil in search of nourishment.
6. Once the plant starts growing, it may remind you of the story "Jack and the Beanstalk." You can watch the plant grow tall for a year (supported with a wooden rod) and let it branch on its own, or make a decision to prune it and force it to branch, making a sturdier plant. If you choose to prune, it's best to trim with a diagonal cut two inches from the top. Be careful as you prune not to cut the main stem more than 1/3 of its height.
7. Continue to add organic compost to fertilize the soil with each pruning and water as you would a houseplant. Only re-pot the fast-growing plant when it is six times taller than the diameter of the pot.
8. Though avocado plants do not bear fruit if grown indoors, you can plant multiple avocado pits at various times in the same pot for a more interesting arrangement.

Garlic

1. Plant a few garlic cloves with pointed tip facing up in a pot with loamy organic soil.
2. Place the pot on a sunny windowsill and water regularly like a houseplant.
3. Green garlicky shoots emerge in a week or so. Harvest with scissors to use in cooking or as a tasty garnish for soups, salads and baked potatoes.



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by Hans Kersbergen

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Part Two

A Dutch Perspective

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Humidity and the Growth Period

When checking the growth schedule of a concentrated nutrient line you will find that there are a number of rules that have to be followed to reach the desired result. One of these rules – and a very important one – is maintaining a high humidity during the growth phase over an 18-hour light cycle. But why is it so important? The answer is quite simple and at the same time rather technical. It's all about good climate control.

Small plant cuttings, or slips, carry a little bit of coolant just in case the water supply runs out too quickly. This means at the start of the growth period when the humidity in the grow room is too low, the leaves will have to use a lot of their coolant. This is caused by the conditions in the grow room and not by the plants themselves. Because the roots of the slips are still not fully developed, it is hard for them to transport coolant to the leaves, which may lead to curling leaf tips. Because the leaves can no longer cool themselves, production stops. It is possible that the leaves will start to burn and the slips may die. This is not because they are of inferior quality but because of the gardener's own climate control mistakes.



“Be sure to check that the tips of the leaves do no start to curl (a clear signal that water has to be added to the medium)”.

Starting the growth phase with a humidity of around 80 per cent means the grow room does not require as much coolant and, therefore, the medium can be kept a little dryer as the leaves are not asking for additional water. This makes for optimal root forming. The roots will have to start finding water.

After giving plenty of water the first time, try not to water the medium for the next few days. Allowing it to dry means the roots really have to work to find water. Be sure to check that the tips of the leaves do no start to curl (a clear signal that water has to be added to the medium). Curling leaf-tips indicate that the grow room has drawn all coolant from the leaves and an extra supply is needed via the roots so that they can keep cooling themselves against the sun (your lamp).

The trick is keeping the medium dry and asking as little coolant as possible from the leaves. This will lead to super fast root forming. When it is time to restart watering, always do so carefully.

Higher EC-value

Once your climate is under control through the humidity and the temperature (75.2°F when the lamps are on, and 75.2°F when the lamps are off), you can start to raise the EC (leaves burn because they can no longer cool themselves and not as a result of a too high nutrient value). This way you can keep your plants denser and shorter. The advantage being that the distance between the leaf nodes is much shorter and the plant will have more spare energy to form flowers.

An easy way to keep humidity high during the growth phase is tightening a plant net at a height of some 24 inches from the slips, and placing transparent plastic on top of it (creating a sort of glasshouse).

To release the heat build-up underneath, you have to make a few holes in the transparent foil. Then install a small humidifier (with a regulator) under the plastic and you can ensure the desired humidity all day and all night.

Do this for a day or five and you will see that everything goes as planned; the slips take root, the plants stay compact and the growth nutrients will show that you are using the right formula, the root stimulator will increase your Mycorrhiza fungi optimally which will produce plants that form roots very fast.



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“The biggest mistake growers can make is that they force their plants to sweat more than they are capable of.”

The latter can increase or decrease the evaporation process of the leaves, depending on the values you will have to stick to.

Training

Getting the leaves to sweat more is quite a technical matter, but our plants, if trained, can evaporate three gallons of water in 24 hours.

The biggest mistake growers can make is that they force their plants to sweat more than they are capable of.

For example, when the temperature rises above 86°F, a too powerful exhaust system is used. Exhausting the old air (more cubic meters) with a higher relative humidity forces the plant to evaporate more water and this is impossible.

Lamps

In the beginning, hang your lamps as high as possible and turn them on for only a few starters. The light intensity, and the number of lamps, creates heat on the leaves. When they are too close to the small leaves and there is too much light, the leaves cannot cool themselves.

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Ventilation

Never turn on the fans in the first phase and avoid aiming them at the leaves. Through the fan, the air around the leaves will dry out very quickly causing them to interpret this as a low humidity.

Leaf-sweating is accelerated by raising the temperature and lowering the relative humidity (RV) by increasing the amount of m3 air that is flowing past the leaves (by fans) and by supplying fresh air with another temperature and humidity.

In our third instalment of **Grow Your Own** we will discuss growth phase temperatures, light, air and EC.



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Energy from the sun makes life possible on earth. Our planet is at just the right distance from the sun so that its rays provide enough heat to keep large masses of water in a liquid state, while at the same time not scorching it to the point where all the water boils away. Hence, the name given to this life supporting distance - the Goldilocks Region (not too hot, not too cold). The sun does more than keep the temperature livable; it also provides the energy for what is perhaps the most fundamental of life's processes - photosynthesis. Photosynthesis is the process by which plants (and some bacteria) convert electromagnetic energy into chemical energy, thus providing the basis of the food chain making every other living process possible.

We'll leave the details of photosynthesis for another time, but it's important to understand something about how plants absorb light so that the application of various lighting systems can be intelligently addressed. In plants, most photosynthesis takes place in the leaves. Leaves are generally green because they contain large amounts of chlorophyll, and chlorophyll is the light-absorbing molecule important in photosynthesis (see figure one). The absorption of light energy by chlorophyll is the first step in the complex process of synthesizing carbon molecules (sugar) from carbon dioxide and water.

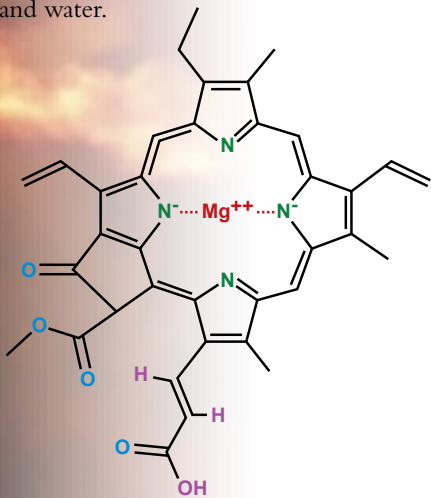


Figure 1: Chlorophyll a the light harvesting molecule of photosynthesis.

Chlorophyll comes in a number of different molecular arrangements, with chlorophyll A and chlorophyll B being found in terrestrial plants. Chlorophyll A strongly absorbs light with wavelengths of 430 and 662 nm, while chlorophyll B has maximum absorptions at 453 and 642 nm. If you compare the absorption spectra of the chlorophylls (figure two) with a spectrum showing the wavelengths of light that are most efficient for photosynthesis (figure three) you'll see that photosynthesis proceeds most efficiently with light wavelengths between 400-450 nm (blue region) and 600-650 nm (red region), matching up closely with the peak absorbencies of the two chlorophylls. Light in the 400-700 nm range is capable of supporting photosynthesis and is called photosynthetically active radiation

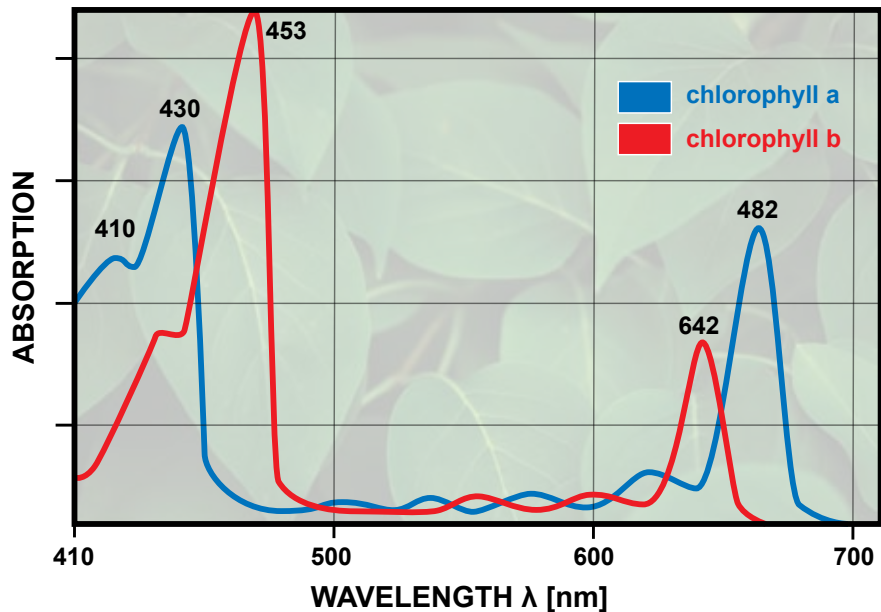


Figure 2: Absorption spectra of chlorophylls a and b.

(PAR). Also note that figure three shows the lowest rate of photosynthesis (but not zero) in the green region. Secondary photosynthetic pigments such as carotenes and xanthophylls absorb some green light. Chlorophyll reflects green light, which explains why plants look green.

Plants do quite well outdoors or in a greenhouse under natural light conditions (so long as the temperature is correct). Therefore, one might think that the sun is the perfect light source for plants. If

you look at the wavelengths of light that reach the planet's surface (figure four) you see a fairly consistent amount of energy from 400-650 nm. Clearly there is plenty of PAR available in sunlight. So, when providing artificial light a full spectrum of PAR is fine. However, since the peak wavelengths for photosynthetic activity occur at around 430 and 650 nm, we can theoretically improve upon nature by employing lamps that have maximum outputs at these wavelengths.



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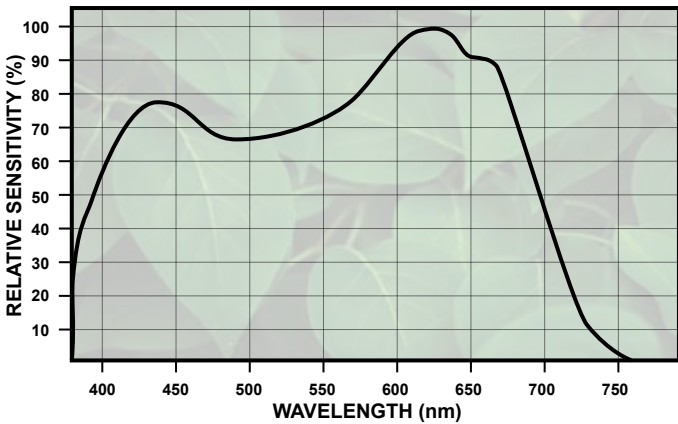


Figure 3: Rate of photosynthesis at different wavelengths of light.

Not only that, contrary to a common belief, a period of darkness is not required for photosynthesis to proceed normally. There are a series of reactions in photosynthesis called the dark reactions but they still occur even when there is light. However, the light-harvesting phase certainly does not occur in the dark, so plants can grow faster if grown in a longer light period.

Moreover, plant life cycles are governed in part by the wavelengths of light they receive. Throughout a natural light-growing season (Spring to Fall), the wavelengths of light reaching the earth slowly shift from the blue to the red, triggering various physiological

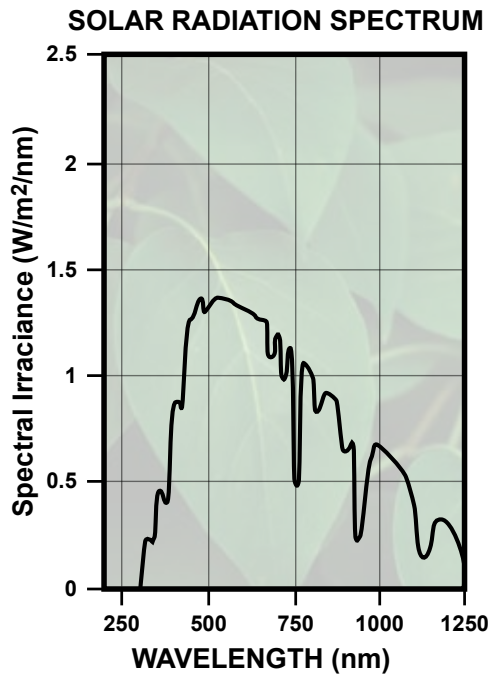


Figure 4: Spectrum of natural sunlight that reaches the surface of the earth.

responses in the plant. As a rule, blue light enhances vegetative growth and red light promotes flowering. The use of artificial lighting provides opportunities for enhancing and controlling plant growth and development that cannot be taken advantage of using natural light alone. Let's take look at some of the lighting systems available to hydroponic growers.

Incandescent Lights

Incandescent lamps are the original light bulb as invented by Edison. They consist of an evacuated glass bulb enclosing a filament usually made of tungsten. When an electric current passes through the filament, the filament rapidly heats and glows brightly to emit light. One advantage of these simple bulbs is that they require no external equipment like a transformer (ballast) to develop the voltage required to start them.

Incandescents are of little use to hydroponic growers (for other than lighting the equipment storage closet). If you look at the emission spectrum of a typical incandescent bulb (figure five) you'll see the emission at the blue end is relatively low while the red is fairly high. However, the output in lumens per watt is low so the amount of PAR per dollar of electricity used is also low.

Incandescent bulbs might be useful for a small application where additional red light is desired, however they have an additional flaw. Figure five shows that the output continues past the visible light region into the infrared. Infrared radiation is heat rays so incandescent bulbs expend a lot of energy producing heat rather than light. In a terrarium or other small space where some heating is actually desired, they can be useful. So-called full spectrum incandescents have the same heat problem and merely filter out some of the yellow wavelengths to produce a more natural color of light.

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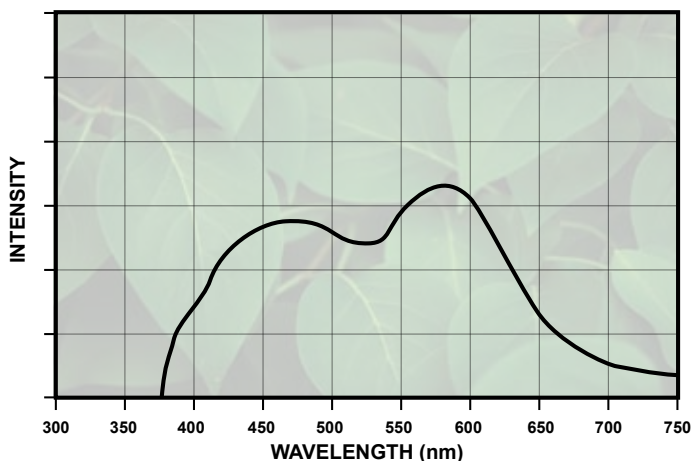


Figure 5: Emission spectrum of a typical incandescent light bulb.

Fluorescent Lights

Fluorescent lamps work on a different principle than incandescent lamps. A fluorescent lamp (figure five) consists of an evacuated tube containing a low-pressure mercury vapor and a pair of electrodes. When power is applied, electrons begin to flow between the electrodes and collide with the mercury atoms. The collisions cause electrons surrounding the mercury nuclei to jump to a higher energy level. The electrons quickly fall back down to lower energy levels, releasing the additional energy as a photon of ultraviolet (UV) light. The UV photons then collide with atoms in a fluorescent coating on the inside of the tube, which in turn excites electrons in a similar way. However, when the electrons in the coating return to a lower energy level a photon of visible light is released. That's the light we see emitted by the lamp (along with a bit of invisible UV light).

Although the intensity of light emitted by fluorescents is considerably higher than that of incandescents, it's still fairly low, so the lamps have to be placed rather close to the plants to have good effect. Fortunately, the PAR is pretty good and there is little heat, so they are more efficient than incandescents.

The makeup of the fluorescent coating can be varied to provide a variety of color outputs. So called cool fluorescent lamps as would be used to light a workspace provide outputs at a very narrow range of peak intensities, however, they do have peaks in the optimum PAR ranges. Halophosphate coatings provide a strong peak at about 430 nm and a broader output near 600 nm (figure six). Natural sunshine or natural spectrum lamps provide a broader range of output wavelengths designed to mimic natural sunlight. It's unclear that this is an advantage for plants since only the 430 nm and 650 nm regions are optimal.

Standard fluorescent tubes find use in starting seedlings and maintaining small plants. Standard tube-type fluorescent lamps are limited by their large size and relatively low output and the need to put them close to plants for maximum effect, so they are not used much in large growing operations.

Other options have been made available in recent years with the advent of the T5 and the compact fluorescent lamp. The T5

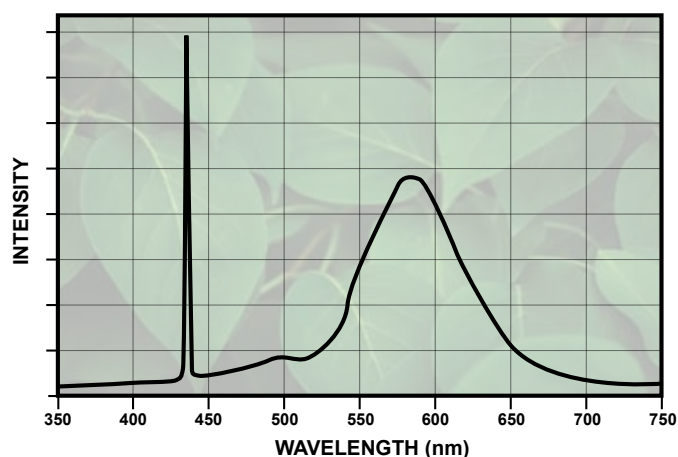


Figure 6: Output of a typical halophosphate fluorescent lamp.

is a high output (up to 5000 lumens) fluorescent designed for horticultural applications that can be run in a single tube fixture or in banks of up to eight tubes in a fixture with a reflecting hood. Compact fluorescent lamps combine the energy efficiency inherent in the fluorescent design with a smaller size that makes them a practical alternative to high intensity discharge lamps since they produce less heat and can be grouped together in modules that can be placed close to plants (within four to 12 inches) while taking up little space.

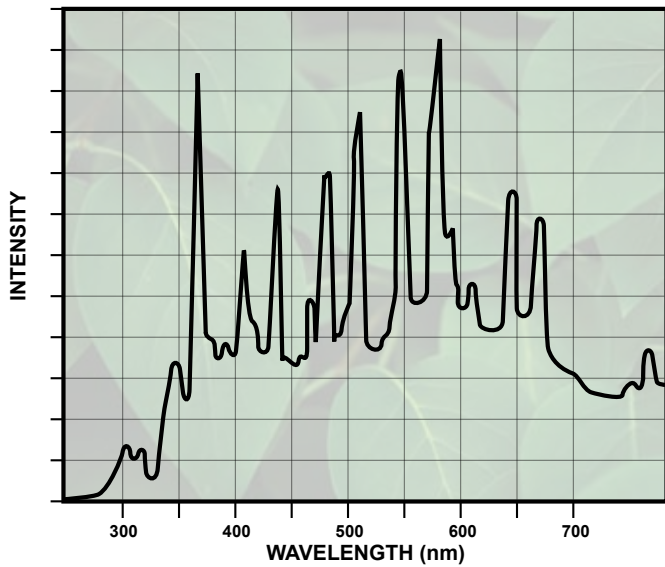


Figure 7: Emission spectrum of a typical metal halide lamp.

High Intensity Discharge Lamps

High intensity discharge (HID) lamps have become the lamps of choice in many indoor applications. There are two types used in horticulture: metal halide and high-pressure sodium. They work on a principle similar to what was described above for fluorescent lamps (an electric current passes through a mixture of gases to excite electrons resulting in the production of photons). The makeup of the gases in the lamp affects the wavelengths of light produced.

HID lamps require an external ballast to develop the initial voltage required to start the lamps. They also generate quite a bit of heat so they can't be placed too close to the plants and good ventilation will often be needed to keep the air temperature down. This is more of a problem in a small space than a large one. Ultraviolet radiation is also a hazard because of the emissions from the mercury that is included to provide the conductive path for the electric current in the lamps. The bulbs are usually not coated with a UV absorbing substance, as is the case with fluorescent lamps. Never look directly at an HID lamp. The use of an eye-shielding hat or goggles is recommended when working near them.

The metal halide (MH) is a type of HID lamp employing a mixture of mercury, argon and metal halides enclosed in a quartz tube. A metal halide is a combination of a metal ion and a halogen ion (a halogen is an element of group 17 of the periodic table which includes fluorine, chlorine, iodine, bromine and astatine). Metal halide lamps provide good broad-spectrum illumination with a slight bias toward the blue end (see figure seven). This makes them ideal for promoting vegetative growth. One thing to keep in mind is that the quartz tube will slowly become opaque over time (because of changes in the crystal structure caused by heating). Even though the lamp may function normally, it will have to be periodically replaced to maintain rated luminous output.

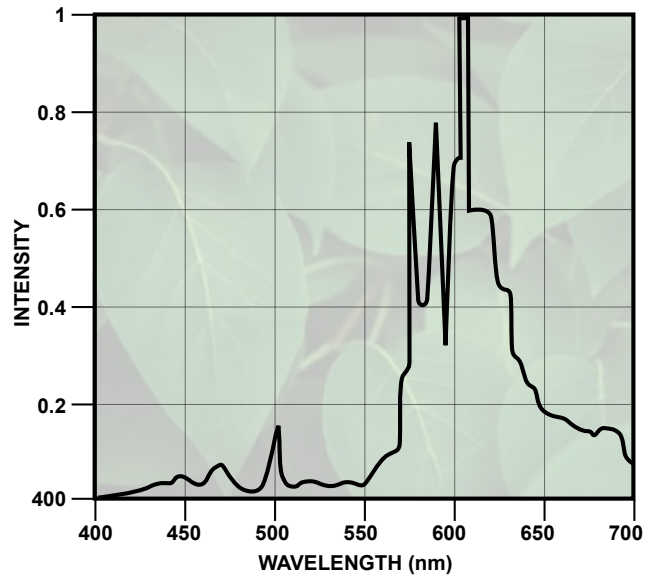


Figure 8: Typical output spectrum of a high pressure sodium lamps.

High Pressure Sodium (HPS) lamps produce light that is biased toward the yellow/red end of the spectrum (figure eight) making them a good choice for promoting flowering. Some manufacturers produce HPS lamps that are more color balanced for plants that do not do well with more of a fall sun colored light. The reason for this is that of all the lamps we have discussed, HPS lamps are the most efficient, producing the most lumens per watt. They are the most economical to operate. This is a major consideration for large installations. Other manufacturers provide combination units that include an MH and an HPS lamp in the same fixture to provide a high intensity balanced spectrum output.

When an HPS lamp initially starts, it doesn't emit its usual color. This is because it works slightly differently than other vapor lamps. The initial arc of an HPS lamp conducts through xenon gas producing a pinkish color. A slug of solid sodium/mercury amalgam vaporizes as the lamp heats up changing the color from whitish blue (from the mercury) to the warmer

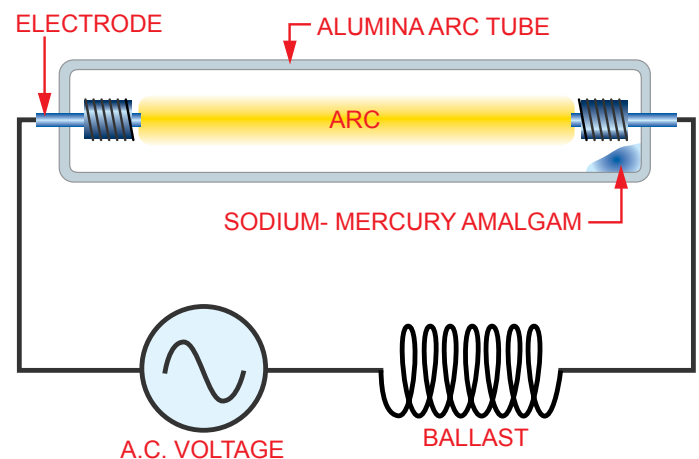


Figure 9: Diagram of a typical HPS lamp system. Lamp is shown just after starting before the sodium-mercury amalgam has vaporized.

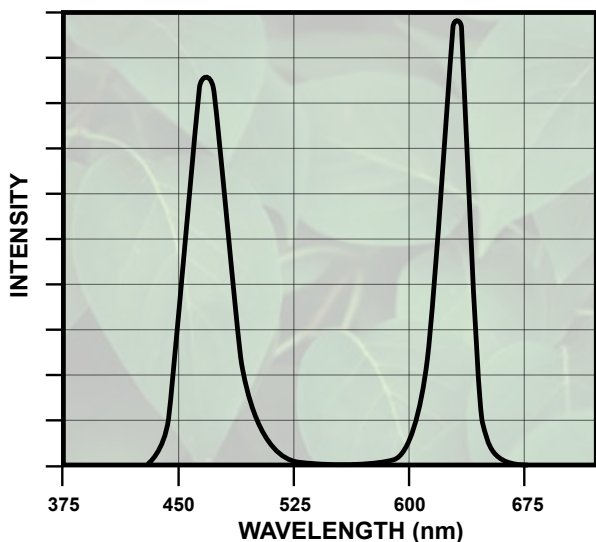


Figure 10: Output spectrum of red and blue LEDs.

yellow/red as the sodium vaporizes and the pressure increases in the lamp (figure nine).

LED Lighting Systems

Advances in light emitting diode (LED) technology have allowed the development of LED-based grow light systems. LEDs offer the advantage of low power consumption, low heat generation and precise color outputs that can be provided to optimize the provided PAR (figure 10). They also last an impressively long time without needing replacement (up to 7 1/2 years compared to one to two years for HID lamps).

LEDs are nothing like a light bulb. There is no glass to break, no hazardous gases and no ultraviolet radiation. They are semiconductor devices that emit light when conducting an electric current. Each individual LED is about the size of a thumbtack so they must be grouped together to provide a workable lamp (figure 11). However, this is another of their advantages -- red and blue LEDs can be combined in virtually limitless combinations to provide any desired ratio of red-to-blue light at just about any intensity.



Figure 11: A typical blue/red LED lamp assembly.

LEDs are not as bright as HID lamps, but because of their low heat output, they can be placed quite close to plants to make up for it. Much technological advancement in LED lighting systems can be expected in the near future.

Decisions, Decisions

You obviously have many choices when it comes to artificial lighting. No one system is perfect for every application.

TYPE	HEAT	EFFICIENCY (lumens per watt)	BULB LIFE (hours)
Incandescent	Moderate	5-25	100-2,000
Compact Fluorescent	Low	45-60	6,000
T5 Fluorescent	Low	80-100	16,000
Metal Halide	High	50-55	10,000
High pressure sodium	High	150	16,000-24,000
Colored LED	Low	8-50	80,000
White LED	Low	100	80,000

Figure 12: Output spectrum of red and blue LEDs.

The species being grown, the size of the growing space, heat consideration, initial installation costs and electricity cost must all be factored in to any decision. The features of each of the lamp types are summarized in figure 12.

MY

HID = High Intensity Discharge
HPS = High Pressure Sodium
LED = Light Emitting Diode
MH = Metal Halide
PAR = Photosynthetically Active Radiation
UV = Ultraviolet



For comparisons of the lighting techniques discussed in this article visit maximumyield.com

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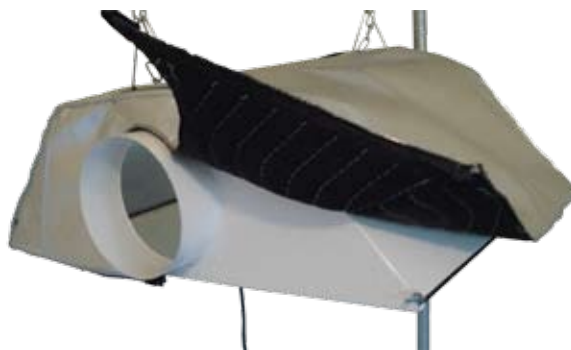
ask for these exciting new products at your favorite indoor gardening store.

Continued from page 34

Reflective Heat Shield Available from Hydrofarm

The Reflector Heat Shield™ is a sturdy, custom-fitted cover that double insulates your existing air-cooled hood against the heat your lights generate. With the Reflector Heat Shield™, less heat escapes into your room and is instead contained within your hood to be better carried away by your existing air-cooling. This results in a cooler environment, happier plants and energy savings from increased A/C efficiency.

- 95 per cent reflective exterior
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- Reduces your grow room temperature
- Maximizes cooling system efficiency
- Reduces air flow noise
- Soft, durable and machine washable
- Strong, high quality construction
- Made in the USA



National Garden Wholesale Has Precise Electronic Controls for Your Garden

National Garden Wholesale proudly welcomes a new group of cutting-edge environmental controls ideal for indoor gardens, solariums and small greenhouses from Solatel. With their simple and accurate designs, these electronic products provide better management of a garden space with less effort needed on the part of the gardener.

The new Solatel products are:

- Plant Pro™ Environmental Controller with CO₂
- Plant Pro™ Environmental Controller without CO₂
- Precise electronic controls for lighting, irrigation, ventilation and CO₂
- Flood Detector Stand Alone (Special Order)
- This device detects overflow of water or nutrient if a pipe breaks or drains clog
- CO₂ 300 (Special Order) - Simply set the desired CO₂ level and the CO₂ 300 does the rest.
- THP 100 Atmospheric Controller - This device coordinates ventilation and CO₂
- PWX-240-4 Power Expander
- PWX-240-U Power Expander
- Controls up to four 1000-watt 240-volt lighting systems.

Let these Solatel products take control of your garden.

For only the best for your gardening needs trust National Garden Wholesale.



Active Air Dehumidifiers by Hydrofarm

High humidity can cause plants to grow poorly and can also promote mould. Hydrofarm's new analog dehumidifier will extract up to four gallons of water per 24-hour period, keeping humidity under control so your plants can thrive.



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- Adjustable air outlet
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- Removable front-loading water tank
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- Six foot power cord
- 110-120-volt/60Hz/3.6-amps/400-watts

ActiveAir Two-Way Meter New from Hydrofarm

Gardeners can conveniently test moisture and pH levels with the handy ActiveAir Two-Way Meter from Hydrofarm. Moisture readings register on a scale of zero (dry) to 10 (moist), and pH readings between pH zero (acidic) and pH 10 (basic). The durable, easy-to-read tester is suitable for indoors or out and needs no batteries to operate.



Sun Gro's New Micronutrient Fertilizer Provides Increased Iron and Magnesium with SunTrace™

For growers looking to improve their levels of iron, magnesium and sulfur, Sun Gro Horticulture Distribution Inc. (Sun Gro) has developed and added to its professional fertilizer portfolio two new micronutrient products: SunTrace™ and SunTrace™ Max.

SunTrace™ is designed to boost micronutrient levels in the root zone. This homogenous (small) granular product ensures that each granule contains magnesium, sulfur, copper, iron, manganese molybdenum and zinc. These secondary and micronutrients are critical for plants to achieve their top performance. The SunTrace™ particle size is approximately one millimeter and was designed so growers could benefit from elevated levels of iron, magnesium and sulfur compared to industry standards and has no additional boron or calcium carbonate. This allows the grower to regulate their micronutrient levels by adding SunTrace™ in their soil mix without increasing their limestone rates in the mix.

Sun Gro's second introduction is SunTrace™ Max. This product has all the same improved nutritional benefits of SunTrace™, but with a larger 2.3-millimeter particle size. Growers now have two particle sizes to choose from when they use SunTrace™ as their source of micronutrients. Both products can also be used in conjunction with a traditional NPK fertilization program.

In addition to SunTrace™, Sun Gro has three other professional fertilizer product lines.

Within the horticultural industry, Sun Gro is the master distributor of Multicote controlled release fertilizers in both Canada and the United States. Sun Gro also distributes its Technigro water-soluble fertilizer product line, which has recently been rejuvenated with new formulations. And finally in the Western United States, Sun Gro is a distributor of Nutricote controlled release fertilizers.

Homebox Flange By Eastside-impex

The Homebox FL160 flange enables additional inputs and outlets to be installed on all original Homeboxes. The only tool required is a sharp knife.

The flange is made of extremely sturdy ABS plastic (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene). ABS is also used to manufacture motorcycle helmets because of its highly shock-resistant and hard surface.

Eastside-impex has specially designed this accessory to make installation child's play.

Simply cut the material to size using the template supplied (the sealing washer), install the flange, screw tight and you're done. The sealing washer ensures a perfect fit.

The flange has a 160-millimeter diameter installation bracket on either side to ensure air hoses fit properly.

Various screw-on reducer fittings (160 millimeter=>125 millimeter / 160millimeter=>100millimeter) are also supplied.

Applications include:

- Direct cooling of lamps
- Air inputs and outlets
- Additional water inputs and outlets

Contents of delivery:

FL160:


- Flange (three parts)
- Filter to protect against dust and insects
- Installation manual

FLR125:

- Two reducer fittings

FLR100:

- Two reducer fittings



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Flairform pH Test Kit

Flairform's pH Test Kit provides the easiest method of obtaining fast and accurate pH readings. With no complex or costly maintenance between tests you'll appreciate why many growers with electronic pH meters resist checking pH.

- Super concentrated - one drop per test - approximately 800 tests per bottle.
- Measures from pH 4.0 through to 8.0: Very important feature because some pH testers do not operate below pH 6.0 (i.e. if nutrient pH is below 6.0, a test will still show 6.0).
- Fast pH readings: Note that pH meter electrodes usually need to be left in the sample for several minutes before an accurate/stable reading is produced.
- Highly accurate, waterproof color chart on side of bottle.
- Perfect back up for die-hard pH meter users.
- Supplied in one ounce dropper bottle with quality test tube.

How accurate is Flairform's pH Test Kit? When using a pH Test Kit you will get accurate results every time. Unfortunately, electronic pH meters can be susceptible to error because lower quality electrodes can respond to foreign species such as sodium. For this reason, if using an electronic pH meter occasionally cross check your readings with a pH Test Kit.



Introducing Dr. DoRight's 100 per cent Bio-based Pest Control



Dr. DoRight's Pest Control is an innovative, 100 per cent bio-based solution to be used on common pests and powdery mildew problems. The product is now shipping from California and is an EPA FIFRA 25b exempt product that is registered or approved in most states (including CA, WA, OR, AZ, MI, NC). Dr. DoRight's is a non-toxic formula designed to combat problems or to be used as preventative maintenance to mite and mildew infestations. Dr. DoRight's is available as a concentrate, which allows for a cost effective routine to maintain plant health.

By utilizing colloidal chemistry, Dr. DoRight's breaks down food-grade essential oils and allows them to become water soluble, harnessing their natural insecticidal properties to kill common insects. Dr. DoRight's oil and water DO mix combine to yield a highly effective, yet not-toxic pest control product. The colloidal micelles in Dr. DoRight's break down an insect's outer shell, damaging their respiratory system, resulting in gradual suffocation.

Dr. DoRight's helps solve powdery mildew problems by penetrating and dislodging the fungal root system, preventing the mildew from feeding and reproducing.



Liquid Lumens HydroFlector Available Exclusively from Hydrofarm

Indoor gardening will never be the same with the new Liquid Lumens HydroFlector. The efficient water-cooled design allows you to install more lights per square foot and decrease the distance between your lights and plant canopy. Water-cooling is scientifically proven to be significantly more efficient than air at removing heat; it is already used in a wide variety of cooling applications including your car's engine.

Sunshine Systems is pleased to offer the GlowPanel™, GrowUFO™ and the GlowPanel Pro™ series of LED grow lights.

From seed to flower, our LED grow lights promote fast and vigorous growth while providing up to 80 per cent energy savings over HPS and metal halide lights.

Our proven technology saves you considerable money by slashing your grow light electric bill and by eliminating your maintenance costs. Every LED grow light we offer is designed to operate maintenance free for over 50,000 hours. There are no expensive and hazardous bulbs to replace.

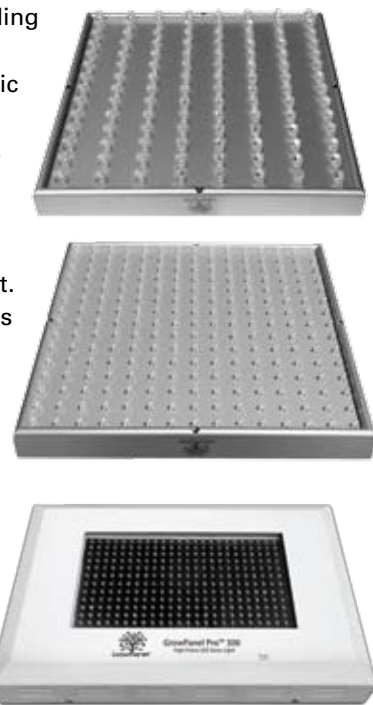
Another great benefit to our LED grow lights is they emit virtually no heat. No heat means no money or energy is wasted on additional cooling or cooling equipment. No heat also means our LED grow lights are very discreet since there is no thermal footprint.

Our LED grow lights typically pay for themselves within a year. With an 11-year lifespan, it is easy to see why our LED grow lights are the smart choice for today's indoor grower.

Sunshine Systems' LED grow lights have undergone extensive testing and are proven in the field. We have many repeat customers who very satisfied with our products.

Our LED grow lights are in use in over 15 countries worldwide and are used by growers ranging from the home hobbyist to the large commercial greenhouse and nursery. Whether you are domestic or abroad we have a LED grow light for you.

Every LED grow light we offer is RoHS compliant and is free of mercury and hazardous materials.



Maverick Sun Introduces D Lux Horticultural Lamps

Using decades of lighting manufacturing experience, Brad Hawkins believed it was possible to develop HID lamps that would give higher yields than the lamps currently on the market. The prototype lamps were sent to Northern California for real world testing. The results of two crop cycles showed that Maverick Sun D Lux lamps gave higher yields than the big name brands. These tests were run using the same ballasts and hoods – the only thing they changed was some lamps. These results are backed up by lumen and spectral distribution test reports from Lighting Sciences.

This moderately priced lamp comes with a full year warranty.



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Forget the Flowerpot! Creative Ideas for Planting Indoors

by Lisa Koosis



The key to great indoor gardening is thinking outside the box -- or, more specifically, thinking outside the flowerpot. Though many garden supply stores stock only the traditional terracotta, ceramic and plastic flowerpots, there are many other alternatives for the indoor gardener with a little creativity.

Your indoor plants can be planted in a variety of containers. Being indoors gives you a bit of flexibility since you needn't worry about the extremes of weather conditions wearing on your chosen planter such cold breaking something or rain rusting it.

Why not consider a child's sand pail as a planter? They come in bright, cheerful colors and would make a great planter, particularly for a child's room or a sunroom. Leave the shovel (usually included) attached for added decoration.

For smaller plants, mugs make great planters and you can get quite creative. Mugs can be found in cute shapes such as animals, or with fun sayings and pictures. They make great planters for a kitchen herb garden and are just the right size to line up on a kitchen windowsill.



Going with that kitchen theme, why not use old pots and pans to plant in? As with any metal planter you choose, you'll need to line it with something waterproof. Most garden supply stores sell liners specifically geared to the job, but a thick trash bag works equally well. Copper pots in particular make beautiful planters.

Ceramic bowls, canisters and cookie jars are also wonderful options for planting. Items such as these make perfect homes for your plants because they're durable and often quite decorative.

Baskets also make pretty planters. What's nice about baskets is that you can use them one of two ways. You can set plastic flowerpots right into them, clustering plants for a container garden effect, but you can also plant directly into the basket if you choose. Again, you'll need to use a protective, waterproof liner to line it with before planting. Baskets come in a wealth of sizes and shapes and you'll easily find one to fit in whatever room you choose.

Don't hesitate to get creative. Some of the things you normally put in the recycle bin make great planters. Coffee cans, for instance, are the perfect size for a small to medium-sized plant. Why not let your kids decorate it for a personalized touch? If you're feeling creative yourself, why not try decoupage?

On the subject of creativity, plain old terra cotta pots make a great canvas for artistic endeavors. They can be made quite easily into mosaics or used for decoupage or even painted.

So why not spice up your indoor garden with a movement away from plain old terra cotta? What better way is there to incorporate your plants into your home décor and your life?

Lisa is an author on <http://www.Writing.Com/>, a site for Poetry Contests.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Lisa_Koosis

MY



DO YOU know?



1 Compost tea can be applied as a foliar spray to feed plants. Coating the leaves with the tea on the tops and bottoms of the leaves will provide a protective coating. However, the solution must be diluted enough as to avoid staining the leaves.

2 Fertility refers to the inherent capacity of a soil to supply nutrients to plants in adequate amounts and in suitable proportions.

3 Turning on fans in the first phase of growth will cause the air around the leaves to dry out very quickly causing them to interpret this as low humidity.

4 A solid-state relay is an electronic device used to switch the electrical current. They are just one part of a lighting controller and are controlled by a timer or trigger cable.

5 Once your plants are established, it is important to have a soil analysis performed on the first three to six inches of the soil and the 12-inch depth. Tests can be performed for pH, percentage of organic matter and NPK among other attributes.

6 When choosing a grow space, ensure every nook and cranny is cleaned. Using a viruscide/fungicide or a solution of nine parts water to one part bleach will ensure your grow space starts off as healthy and clean as possible. This process should be repeated before every crop rotation.

7 In terms of greenhouses, gothic refers to the shape of the arch. Gothic greenhouses are beautiful and functional and able to withstand strong winds and extreme weather due to their unique design.

8 A period of darkness is not required for photosynthesis to proceed normally. There are a series of reactions in photosynthesis called the dark reactions but they still occur even when there is light.

9 Vegetative crops like lettuce and oriental vegetables require less light than fruiting crops like tomatoes and cucumbers. Fruiting crops require less light when the plants are younger and still in the vegetative growth stage.

10 Along with sufficient area intake and exhaust to control fresh air supplementation to the garden, the installation of proper lighting ventilation is capable of removing up to 75 per cent of harmful heat that radiates from the bulb.

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CHECK YOUR growing I.Q.

by Erik Biksa

Q



1. In terms of dry weights, most plants are ___ water?

- a) 50%
- b) 30%
- c) 85%
- d) 100%

2. What can be used to promote sturdier branches in crops?

- a) applications of Potassium Silicate
- b) increased air movement
- c) sufficient plant spacing
- d) yoga

3. Mycorrhize are _____ which form a beneficial relationship with the plants root system

4. Rhizobium are _____ which form a beneficial relationship with the plants root system

5. Which of the following can be used to classify the lighting requirements of plants?

- a) Day neutral
- b) Long day
- c) Short day
- d) Irregular day

6. Which of the following factors increases the occurrence of hermaphrodites in crops?

- a) Irregular soil moisture
- b) High temperatures
- c) Interruptions in light/dark cycles
- d) Michael Bolton

7. Spidermites can breed faster during hotter and drier periods

- a) True
- b) False

ANSWERS:

September 2008 quiz

1) c, 2) Appliance constantly cycles 3) e, 4) a, 5) e, 6) a,b,c,d,e.

answers to this quiz will be printed in the November 2008 issue of Maximum Yield.

A

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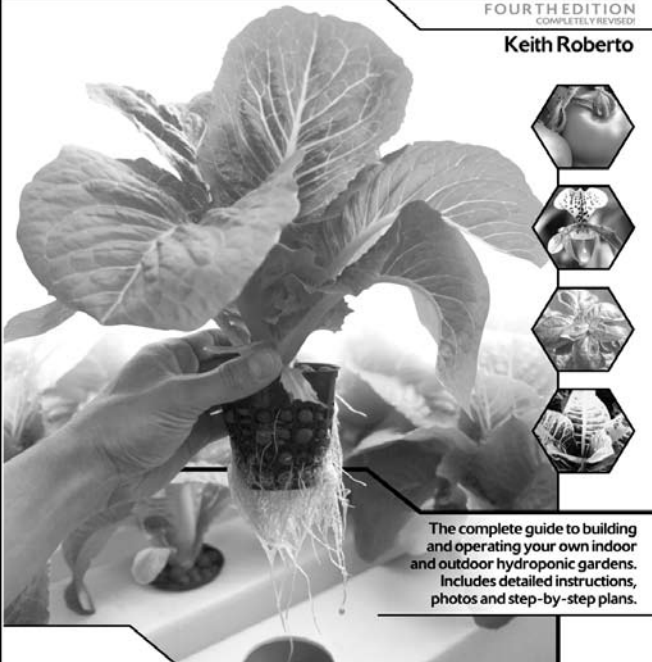
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1901 NW 18th Street, Building E,
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954-960-0822

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12811 SW 42nd Street,
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305-598-4311

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Hydroponics of Tampa
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Tampa, FL 33612
813-333-6828

Just Ripe Garden Supply
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Miami, FL 33186
305-969-2004

Simply Hydroponics & Organics
7949 Ulmerton Road,
Largo, FL 33773
727-531-5355

Simply Hydroponics & Organics (North)
3642 South Suncoast Boulevard,
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352-628-2655

Sunshine Hydroponics Garden Center
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407-830-GROW

Sunshine Hydroponics Garden Center
5561 S. Orange Blossom Trail,
Orlando, FL 32809
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Atlantis Hydroponics
1035 Baxter Road 7,
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Rockford, IL 61109
815-874-5700

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Suite B1-4415 Harrison Avenue,
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800-71-HYDRO

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815-637-4769

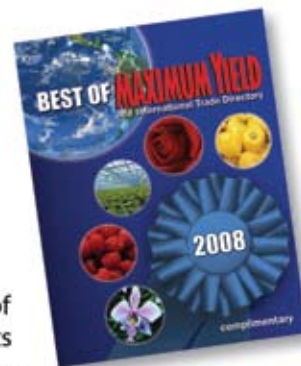
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502-366-4000

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800-669-2088

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Baltimore, MD 21211

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East Lansing, MI 48823
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503-297-7331

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Austin, TX 78704
512-440-4769

Texas Hydroponics & Organics (Dallas)
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Dallas, TX 75226
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Greenthumb - Vermont
394 Route 15,
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Seattle, WA 98103
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800-426-6937

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Castlerock, WA 98611
360-274-7960

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Seattle, WA 98103
206-547-2202

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Vancouver, WA 98665
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Tacoma, WA 98406
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Indoor Garden & Lighting
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253-373-9060

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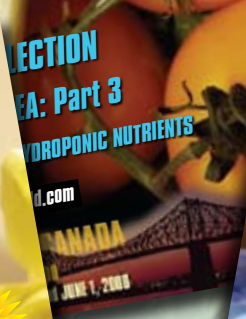
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Erik Biksa completes his backwoods garden in this article on reaping what you sow.



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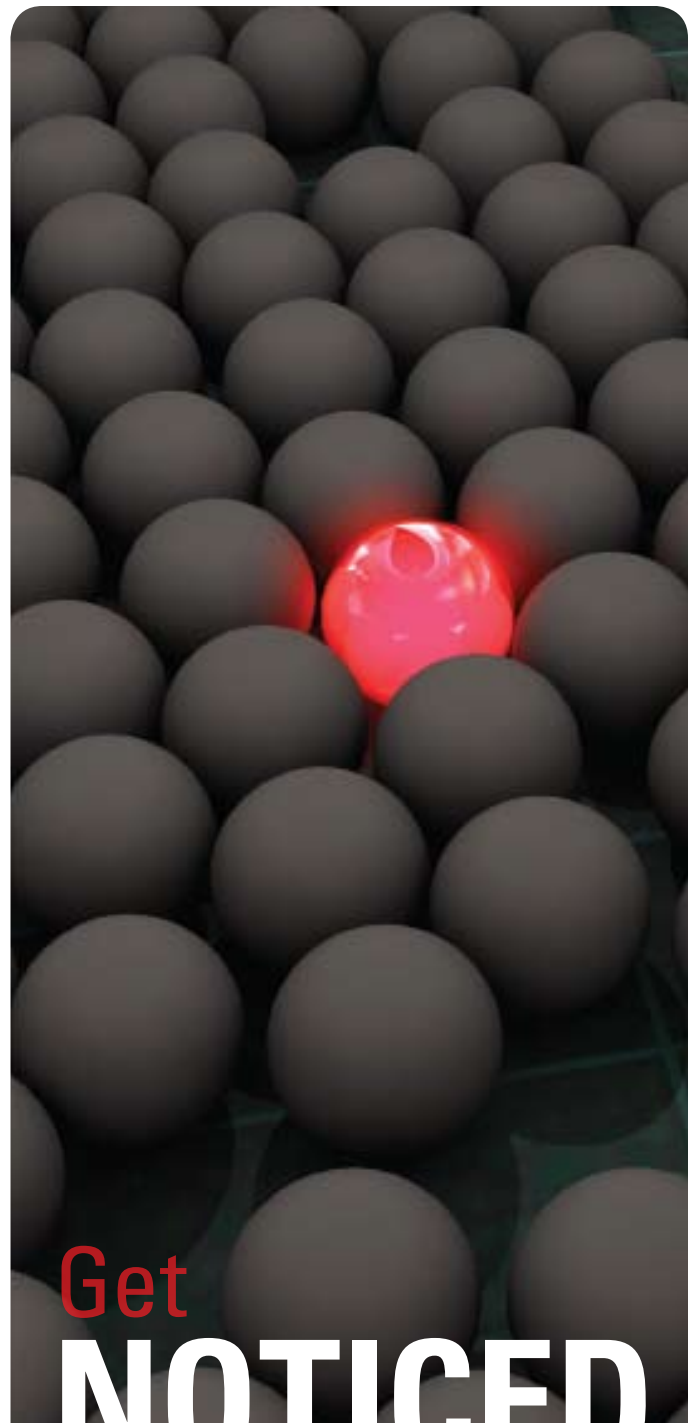
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