

## **Sustainable Propagation Material<sup>®</sup>**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

I have been working in the nursery industry for 32 years, including my apprenticeship in Germany. As you can imagine, I have worked in quite a few propagation greenhouses using different materials. Before starting my own business I worked for Barbara and James McGeoch at Birkdale Nursery in Brisbane. That's where I met Peter Lewis who has roped me in to give this presentation on sustainable propagation material. The propagation material I am referring to is Q Plug, which is a stabilised rooting media made from a mixture of peat and glue (an organic polymer). Q Plugs are strong and sponge like. They do not crumble which means plants can be handled and potted easily. They also provide ideal air/water ratios for exceptional root development and growth.

I came across Q Plugs through Peta and Scott from Crystal Waters Nursery. They were looking for a product which would maximise production and efficiency for their potting machine. I have been using Q Plugs for 5 years and the more I use them the more I like them.

The advantages of using Q Plugs are:

- Lightweight and will not crumble.
- Easy to grade visible roots without disturbing plant, roots stay intact.
- Easy to rewet and moisture stays consistent.
- Maximum potting efficiency, no disturbance to root structure.
- Increased efficiency by not tipping out a tube.
- Smaller than tube therefore saves space on bench.
- Quicker to dispatch plant with visible roots.
- No setback after potting due to not disturbing root system.
- Conveniently packaged and storable in shed to avoid exposure outside.
- To extremes of weather, weeds and other pests and pathogens.
- Ideal for seeds, cuttings, tissue culture, and fern spores.

There are a few things to be aware of in using Q Plugs:

- Need more frequent watering than tubes because of size,
- Need to be potted up quicker than tubes due to size.

So, in summing up, Q Plugs will save you money and time and these are big advantages in today's challenging market.

