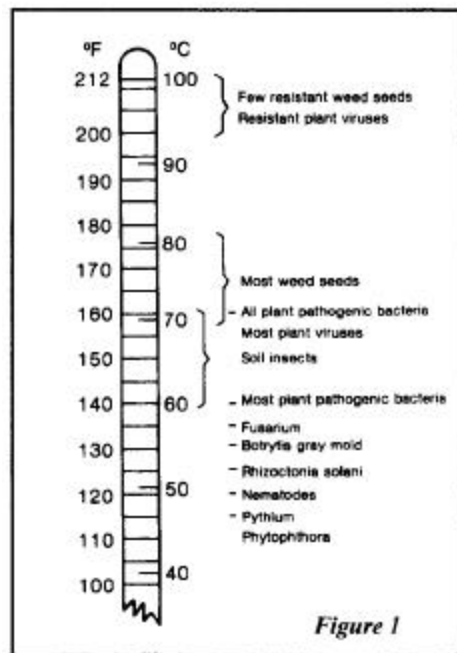


## The Growers Hot Vats - Container Sterilization Equipment

Hot water sterilization has been used to control pests that might be held over in used containers. Most pathogens and weed seeds are killed when containers are held at 70°C to 80°C (158-176°F) for 3 minutes (Figure 1).

Growers Hot Vats are designed to sterilize any type of container that will fit into them. Blocks or containers are stacked into a cage (Figure 2), which is hydraulically submerged into a hot water vat. This system uses a gas burner to maintain a constant temperature - there is no wait between cycles for the water to warm back up.



Production is only limited by the speed at which the blocks can be placed in and out of the cage. The manufacturer supplies baskets for stacking containers before lifting into the Hot Vat, however, this involves heavy lifting by hand. An alternative is to fabricate a stand with rollers that easily moves racks of containers into the Hot Vat (Figure 2). The rack can be loaded on the ground and then lifted with a forklift onto the stand. This speeds up the process and eliminates hand lifting.

The number of blocks that can be sterilized in one dip depends on the size and dimensions of the blocks and how they are arranged. Generally 50 Styroblocks can be dipped at one time. Using the system described above, two people can keep the vat in constant use, which equates to about 300 to 350 dips per hour.

This product has been on the market for about two years and since then the company has modified the vat based on consumer feedback. It costs \$8250 without shipping. For more information call Northern at 1.800.328.8900 or E-mail at [northern@willmer.com](mailto:northern@willmer.com).

