

We are unable to supply this entire article because the publisher requires payment of a copyright fee. You may be able to obtain a copy from your local library, or from various commercial document delivery services.

From Forest Nursery Notes, Winter 2012

202. © Organics and biological control in propagation. Kutz-Troutman, A.
International Plant Propagators' Society, combined proceedings, 2010, 60:201-205. 2011.

Organics and Biological Control in Propagation[®]

Alison Kutz-Troutman

1050 Larabee Ave. Suite 104, #365, Bellingham, Washington 98225

Email: Alison@SoundHorticulture.com

Even the most conventionally trained professional growers are learning now how to manage biologically active materials, and living organisms in their greenhouse growing systems. Materials for consideration by nursery operators would include: biologically active container media, the addition of microbial-based products (both bacterial and fungal), biostimulants, beneficial insects, and nematodes.

INTRODUCTION

Growers are discovering a wide range of benefits as they begin to build biodiversity into their operations. We are essentially learning how to stack “environmental services” into otherwise sterile growing systems. Some of the many benefits include increased worker safety, decreased use of pesticides, enhanced root growth and nutrient utilization, heightened flower color, and marketability. As scientific data continues to accumulate regarding the multiple benefits of increasing biodiversity on farms with food crops, there are correlations between growing sectors worth noting. These data support what organic farmers already recognize about the self-regulating effects of their operational models. These concepts are to some degree transferable to our largely conventional models of growing container plants for market. The presentation at IPPS in Bellingham attempted to give an overview of how we might achieve these goals of enhanced biocontrol and fertility through the use of some accessible tools, like beneficial insects and compost teas.

UNDERSTAND YOUR MOTIVES AND GET SUPPORT

Growers please consider the following:

- It is important to have clear and specific goals. Approach the problem all or nothing, or area by area.
- Make sure your goals are realistic. Will the management and staff agree on what is envisioned?
- Create a budget based on these goals. Keep it reasonable and affordable.
- Implement a simple program in propagation. Note and track your small successes, and if there is a glitch, make note and get support.
- Note your improvements in plant quality. Point these things out to team members that might not notice your efforts, or how it might affect them as that plant material move from propagation to the next growing stage.
- Build trust amongst your staff members, so there is an understanding if they communicate well with you, you will be responsive to them, and that you can create a track record of successes as you learn how to use these new tools.