

# Calcium carbonate: A pH paradigm shift in potting soils?

A study conducted by Oregon State University evaluated the effectiveness of various limestone minerals in Douglas fir bark potting soil. Practical field tests in commercial

Columbia River Carbonates in Woodland, WA, in partnership with Oregon State University, Dr. J.S. Owen and Judy Kowalski completed the study "Managing pH in a

Earth Mix 14M, were compared. Results were gathered and guidelines established. In this trial, Earth Mix 14M suggests a greater pH response and stability in container

growth response.

Van Essen now has a new challenge: nursery stock is ready for market months earlier, saving labor, water, fertilizer, and overall production costs, while gaining even better plant quality. Earth Mix 14M provided a "pH paradigm shift" in their

substrate.

While we must remember that many factors influence substrate blends, such as alkalinity of irrigation water, specific crops grown in the substrate, media components, fertilizer use, etc. the Oregon State University study and the nurs-

ery field trials show that effective alternatives to standard dolomite additions as part of a substrate recipe do exist.

For a copy of the study and more information, contact Gudrun Mahrt at 360-225-4108 or gmahrt@carbonates.com



This photo shows the results attained when EM14 was used.

cial nursery situations also ended up in some pleasant surprises.

Container substrates and soilless growing media used in nearly all nursery greenhouse crops utilize more or less decomposed organic matter and do not usually contain mineral soils. These substrates have shown very little buffering against pH changes over time, which can potentially create plant growth response issues.

Douglas fir soilless substrate for containerized nursery crops." The one year study evaluated different limestone materials to manage longer term pH effects in Douglas Fir soilless substrates.

The study evaluated the effectiveness of commonly used pre-mix liming agents, determined the best rates for desired pH and pH stability over time. Dolomite, standard powder agricultural lime, MICRONA Ag Lime, pelletized lime, and a new product,

cultures over time.

Erin Wickcliffe, Plant Health Technician at Van Essen Nursery, a 300-acre, woody ornamental and grafted conifer nursery company in Lebanon, OR, is constantly on the look-out to further improve plant quality and production. John Wayland of Nursery Connection, Hubbard, OR, changed the limestone mineral from dolomite to Earth Mix 14M in the substrate recipe for conifers and in their extensive box wood production. This resulted in unexpected root



Shown here is a Truedwarf Standard that was planted without using Columbia River Carbonates' EM14M.

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