

Osmocote[®] Exact[®] is successfully trialed in alpine climate

Cherry Lane Nursery, Stanthorpe QLD

Located on the Queensland – New South Wales border, approximately one thousand metres above sea level, you'll find Cherry Lane Nursery.

Cherry Lane is a retail and wholesale nursery run by Barry Neilsen. It sells fruit trees, deciduous flowering trees and conifers. At this altitude an alpine climate prevails throughout the year – in winter temperatures can drop to as little as -10°C, and in summer they can reach the mid 20°Cs. In a variable climate like this most fertilizers struggle to give consistent performance, but Barry Neilsen has started using an Osmocote Exact combination that responds to the rapidly changing temperature and the growth patterns of the plant.

Barry Neilsen explains, "Lots of manufacturers make claims about the effectiveness of their fertilisers, but they often forget about where growers are actually going to use them – fertilizers that work in low altitudes don't necessarily work up here. So when John Daly invited me to attend the Osmocote Exact launch, at which Margaret Scott was speaking, I came away convinced that Osmocote Exact was the fert I needed to use."

A shorter growing season means a healthier bottom line

After attending this seminar John Daly (Scotts Regional Sales Manager, Qld/NT) continued working with Barry Neilsen to set up product trials for Osmocote Exact. The trial results were incredible. Before using Osmocote Exact the nursery was propagating in winter and then carrying the plants over to be sold in the following year. By using Osmocote Exact the trees were ready for sale two months earlier with significantly enhanced growth.

Cherry Lane now incorporates Osmocote Exact into the potting mix rather than adding it to the top of the pot. Barry makes just one application in the first year, which provides all the plants' needs.

Whereas other products deliver too much fertiliser too soon in the growth cycle, or at the wrong times, Osmocote Exact responds to the temperature and moisture of the soil with a release rate that gives the plants what they need when it's needed. This means that the plants and trees can now be propagated, grown and sold in one season.



Barry Neilsen at his Cherry Lane nursery located on the NSW and Queensland border

"Because we only have to make one treatment each year, Osmocote is saving the business time and money. The shortened growing season is also having a great effect on our cash flow and our bottom line," says Barry Neilsen. "We can now propagate trees for resale two to three months earlier and I've found that Osmocote Exact gives our trees much healthier growth – trees that were two feet before are now up to six feet at the time of sale."

It's not only Osmocote that's having a positive effect on the business. Barry uses five litre bags to grow fruit trees and with the ongoing drought they're having real problems keeping the soil wet. John Daly, recently recommended Scotts Hydraflo 2 to solve the problem.

Hydraflo 2 is a double active long-term wetting agent which aids re-wetting and water distribution in pots and soils. It prevents root rot by enhancing drainage in wet pots, maintains air porosity, and increases root ball density and cation exchange.

Barry laughs as he tells us, "Now the roots are not only growing to the bottom of the soil, they're actually growing out of the bottom of the bags!"



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Growing success