

8 ACHTER DE SCHERMEN / BEHIND THE SCENES

Michiel Declerck

- Rolde als handelswetenschapper van de schoolbanken bij Gediflora binnen en gaf de voorbije twee seizoenen zijn job een nieuwe invulling.
- Is de dagelijkse draaischijf tussen leveranciers, serre, commerciële binnendienst, logistiek en IT.

- After leaving college he landed at Gediflora as a commercial scientist and during the past two seasons has given his job a new dimension.
- Is the daily hub between suppliers, greenhouse, commercial internal sales, logistics and IT.



Wist je dat ...

... er **trage, normale en snelle bewortelaars** bestaan? Afhankelijk van ras en familie – en met het oog op een zo kort mogelijke bewaartijd – ontstaat op die manier een enorme puzzel waarin 20 miljoen bewortelde stekken per seizoen een plaatsje hebben. Gemiddeld krijgt een stekje 15 dagen bewortelingstijd.

Did you know that ... ?

... there are **slow, normal and fast rooting cuttings?** Depending on variety and family – and with the aim of keeping the storage time as short as possible – an enormous puzzle is created in which 20 million rooted cuttings per season have to be potted. On average, a cutting is given 15 days to root.

Always on the look-out for operating as efficiently as possible on a very large scale

After breeding and propagation, the Belgian ball-shaped chrysanthemums are shipped back from Kenia and Brazil to Oostnieuwkerke (Belgium). There is no sign of colour or smell at this stage, because the cuttings are barely three centimetres tall and each one of them is green. Michiel Declerck and Astrid Martens take charge of them.

Michiel Declerck – production planning and purchase – has difficulty in describing his tasks precisely. “My tasks are wide-ranging. If I take my eye of the ball so to speak, it has an impact on just about everybody. In a way, I am the hub of the whole process. In July and August, I start making a forecast for the following year, based on the current demand. Who’s asking for what, in what quantity, at what particular period and how will this be reflected in the following season? Based on the original demand, I try to predict as accurately as possible what we will need to produce during the following season. I then continually look for solutions to solve the discrepancies between my forecast and the actual results. (laughs) With the unrooted cuttings we try to work as efficiently as possible, starting with the supplier. Combined deliveries, correctly labelled, according to variety

and quantity arrive and leave for the customer as fast as possible. In between, a manual control takes place and of course it is important to utilize the air cargo space as efficiently as possible. The cuttings that are rooted here are of a different matter. After arrival they are placed in the cold store. This already involves a great deal of detail in order to ensure optimal efficiency further on, because we try to keep the cuttings in such a way that they can be prepared easily and rapidly at a later phase. Our scanning system is essential in this respect”.

As the greenhouse manager, Astrid Martens is responsible for the executive side of the greenhouse. “In the cutting season I take care of a very diverse team of interim workers, divide them into balanced groups of five people and together we manage the entire planting process. This starts every morning with a

quality check of the day before. Is what we planted OK? Was it done correctly? It’s important that this does not take up much time, because every tray must of course be of the same quality at the same time. In trays with 125 plugs the cuttings get time to take root. The trio mix is a different matter, because there we put three cuttings in one plug: three colours and sometimes cuttings of different families... It’s crucial that in the end everything is done correctly and you should keep in mind that all the cuttings stay the same green colour for us in this whole process. I have developed my own system for this, for which I also pick the right people. Preferably, they have to be calm, concentrated, be attentive and moreover remain so.”

Large puzzle

“It seems easier than it actually is”, explains Michiel. “I take into account rooting

times, as short a storage time in the cold store as possible, transport, last minute orders, allocation of deliveries to suppliers ... you name it. And at peak times it’s all about pushing and puzzling. I largely depend on the accuracy of our stock management. The more accurate live data I have access to, the better.” Astrid: “Our scanning system allows us to calculate how many cuttings per person can be processed on average per hour. It is important that we keep up that pace, because the planning that Michiel uses is also based on these data. Between March and July it is sometimes a bit stressful in the greenhouse, but I still enjoy the start of the cutting season. And I have my hands full, you know. The preparation, the right number of trays, the plugs, whether or not for trios ... just in time, to guarantee the best quality at all times.”