

GGP excursion international press 2018

On Thursday 4 October 2018, 29 members of the international press visited five companies within or near Zundert. They were joined by two delegations of the Russian tree nursery association APPM.

Schrauwen Machinebouw Zundert

Zandweide 32
4882 BC Zundert
www.handelsondernemingschrauwen.com
or www.s-m-z.nl

Our first stop is Schrauwen Machinebouw, wholesaler for agricultural machinery, equipment and tractors. This company specialises in tree nursery equipment since 1967 and prides itself on its close cooperation with its customers.

Throughout the years, they have developed multiple machines, from simple self-propelled sprayers to very modern sowing and reaping machines. The machines are sold in Europe, the United States, and Canada. Almost every European country (except for Russia, but including Poland) has a European sales network of one or two traders.

Manager Wilfried Schrauwen explains how the different pruning machines and systems work. He says that in the tree nursery industry, it is not yet possible to develop one machine for all pruning activities. The individual steps within the process are just too diverse. When we ask why his company mostly focuses on tree nurseries, Schrauwen says: "The tree nursery industry is much smaller than the agricultural industry. That is why we always work with small numbers. However, we see that as a challenge. We work with five engineers, and we do not want to expand that team. We want to continue to serve our customers personally."

Schrauwen Machinebouw also sells (used) machines of other companies, and provides maintenance services.

Boomkwekerij E. van Dijck

Elderstraat 14
4882 JH Zundert.
www.evandijck.nl

Erik van Dijck, who still owns the company till this day, founded Boomkwekerij E. van Dijck in 1992. He has one full-time employee. In the spring and fall, these are joined by three additional employees. The grower specialises in growing planting materials in pot. The assortment consists of conifers (60 per cent) and shrubs (40 per cent), with a total of approximately 170 different types of plants. The small breeder plants are sold in P9 and 12 cm pots. The grower exports to Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, and the UK.

They grow approximately 700,000 plants on a little over 3 hectare. They are close together, so weed won't grow there. All plants are propagated between June and February by grafting. Every year, 700,000 new grafts are created. A fifth of those comes from different mother plants, the remaining part from seedlings in the field that are cut to create the same size and shape.

The greenhouse of 7,000 square meters has floor heating, which allows the grafts to be heated from the bottom up. Rooting powder is also used, but only for a part of the grafts and between December and January.

Van Dijck does not only grow small seedlings, but also different Christmas products, such as small cypresses and Picea Conica, which are sold at the Flora Holland auction. Since the demand for these products is high, Erik van Dijck would like to expand this part of his business. However, current laws prevent him from doing this.

In April, Gaultheria is sown, with 12-14 seeds a pot. This is in preparation for the Christmas season. Gaultheria is supplied in three different pot sizes: 9, 10.5, and 13 cm.



Boomkwekerij De Raamberg

Raambergweg 17

4882 NP Klein Zundert.

www.boomkwekerijderaamberg.nl

Kwekerij De Raamberg, founded in 1987, started with forestry and shrubbery. Approximately 20 years ago, the company switched to producing spindles and rootstock for low, semi-tall and tall stock breeding. The owner Ton van Riel, his son-in-law Werner Mooren, and six others work at the company. The total area is approximately 25 hectare.

The company produces spindles and rootstock from seed for many types, most of which can be found in nature. The 1-year old seedlings are bought mostly in the Zundert area. They are grown for 2 years and supplied as rootstock for floriculture or starting materials for growers of standard trees. Machines do most of the work, from removing the plants and weeds to harvesting the plants that are ready for delivery. Inside, the plants are attached to bamboo sticks, and planted with a planting machine within just a few seconds. The tree nursery sells most of the products to other tree nurseries, 30 per cent goes to trade. The trees are three years old at the most when they are sold. The customers mostly come from tree nurseries, both within and outside of the Netherlands. 60-70 per cent of the plants are exported to Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, and the UK.

Boomkwekerijen Zundert

Antwerpseweg 83

4891 CM Rijsbergen

www.boomkwekerijenzundert.nl

Boomkwekerijen Zundert has been growing a wide assortment of plants since 1990. The company started out in Zundert, but has been established in Rijsbergen since 2014. The tree nursery is managed by the third generation, Lex and Lisette Domen. They employ five Dutch and three Romanian workers.

They added humus to 20 hectare of sandy soil, which has resulted in the perfect type of soil for growing plants. The assortment mainly consists of rootstock, planting materials, forestry and shrubbery, and spindles. The 250 different types are mainly grown in the own tree nursery, if necessary supplemented with purchases from trusted suppliers. This includes types such as *Acer platanoides* and *Acer palmatum*, and different types of *Fagus*, *Carpinus*, *Crataegus*, *Wisteria*, and *Tilia*. Production from seed starts with stratification. *Quercus*, *Corylus*, and *Fagus* are sown in rows. The seeds come from all over the world. Some customers want to use the seeds from their own plants.

The company has invested a lot in biodiversity and sustainable production. Irrigation water is coming from springs, the colourful flowerbeds benefit from useful insects and butterflies. Solar panels on the roof of the hall contribute to the electricity supply and for lighting, only LED lights are used. The buildings are heated with geothermal heat. Rainwater is collected from the roof, and then used in for example the spraying tank. Weeds are mostly treated with burners. When the temperature is very low, it would be better to use herbicides. Otherwise, the burner would use up too much gas. *Tagetes* and *Miscanthus* serve as plant fertilisers.

The sales activities focus on tree nurseries, trading companies, exporters, landscapers, municipalities, and gardeners, both within the Netherlands and beyond. Approximately 20 per cent of the sales are export, but this number is increasing, despite the fact that there are no marketing activities for the export market.



Esri Potcultuur

Oekelsestraat 4

4891 CP Rijsbergen

www.esripotcultuur.nl

Johan and Agnes Vermeeren founded ESRI Potcultuur in Rijsbergen. John and Agnes also employ three Romanian workers. They have a container field with 1.5 hectare with potted plants and container grown plants. They also have a vegetable green house of 1,300 square meters, with grafting tunnels and wintering tunnels. In total they grow approximately 850,000 potted plants a year, in pots of 2 and 5 litres. They also provide ground covers in P14 (1.3 litres) pots. John's father used to have a pig farm at this location. In 2000, the family switched to growing potted plants at the container field and in the plastic tunnels Agnes Vermeeren explains the sudden switch from pigs to plants: "The pigs weren't making us a lot of money, so in 2000, we had to look at other opportunities. I decided to go for potted plants. I just followed my instincts, and I love putting plants in pots."

Nowadays, the tree nursery specialises in forestry and shrubbery and ground covers. There are approximately 180 types, all in pots. One of the plastic tunnels is used for grafting, another one for growing Euonymus and Ilex. Sometimes, we buy seedlings and grafts from other companies in the area, as starting materials for our own products. We create approximately 400,000 grafts for our own products.

According to the law, irrigation water used for growing products in containers has to be reused. Rain water and water from the sprinkler are collected. In 2017, we built a new irrigation container.

Our plants are sold to other growers and wholesalers, gardeners and garden centres. ESRI exports plants to Belgium, France, Great-Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland, Norway, Sweden, and Croatia.