OCTOBER 2023

Dear Readers,

In this months newsletter:

Education & Research Centre Update
Developing a Biocontrol Agent to Combat Charcoal Rot
Welcoming Emily Harrison to Neutrog

If you are interested in more information about Neutrog, please let us know at marketing@neutrog.com.au to make sure you receive both our monthly newsletters.

The one you're reading now is commercially focused, while we also put together a newsletter dedicated to growing plants at home. Each month we collate seasonal advice from experts, product profiles and garden features with a full insight into Neutrog.

Kind Regards,
The Neutrog Team

Research Centre Development Update

The foundation of Neutrog's planned capital development in the Education and Research Centre, is the significant expansion of the Neutrog onsite laboratory.

The laboratory development is a reflection in the growing R&D team, the scope of the projects being undertaken - and Neutrog's overall commitment to R&D.

When R&D commenced, the current laboratory was established in the space that had previously also been a lab, but for the old copper mine. This area was adequate when the team consisted of just one microbiologist and the work being undertaken was less complicated than it is now. In recent years, as the R&D program has grown, so too has the number of staff and the level of technological equipment required.

The new Research Centre will fill a footprint four times the size of the existing laboratory and importantly, will also be a certified Biological Containment Level 2 (BC2) laboratory.

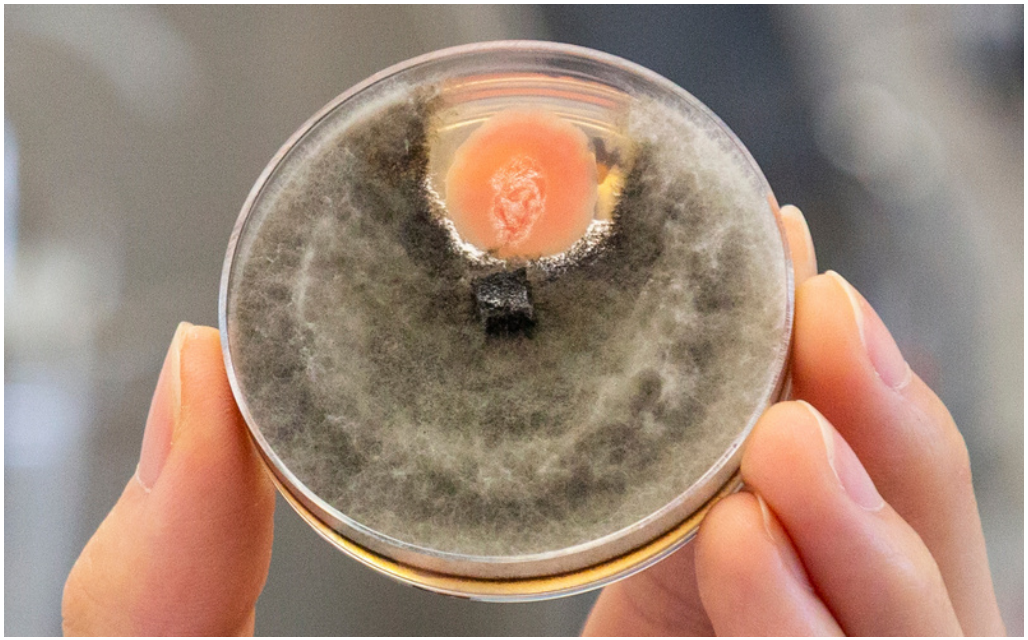
The significance of this classification relates specifically to biosecurity and the ability for Neutrog to be able to receive and process soil samples from overseas and also work with human and animal pathogens.

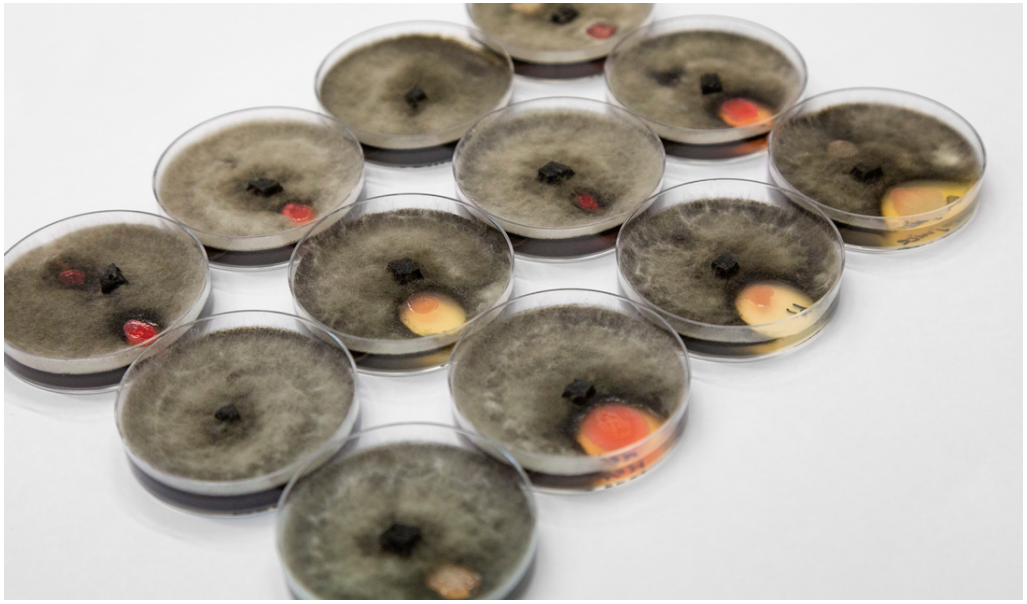
Improving workflow and productivity and planning for future growth has influenced the layout with benches around the periphery and in the centre, new offices as well as additional space for biohazard hoods, equipment bays for the minus 80 freezer, autoclave, freeze dryer, PC2 machine, spectrophotometer and bioreactor.

The Research Centre, will have immediate visibility to both the adjacent Brewing Room and liquid storage, two areas that have day-to-day engagement with the lab.

The extensive use of reclaimed glass panels throughout the development, means visitors and staff will have an unobstructed view into the Research Centre from multiple areas, reflecting that R&D is literally at the centre of Neutrog.

Developing a Biocontrol Agent to Combat Charcoal Rot





The R&D team at Neutrog have spent a number of years examining and screening soils from around Australia seeking microbes capable of increasing nutrient use efficiency, plant health and disease inhibition. In particular, the ability to inhibit diseases using biocontrol agents has been a major focus of our work.

One of the more recent projects by Neutrog's R&D team is to look for biocontrol agents for charcoal rot by identifying microbes that inhibit its growth.

Charcoal rot is a disease caused by the fungi, Macrophomina phaseolina which affects over 750 plants, especially crops. Unlike many other fungal pathogens, charcoal rot thrives in hot conditions whether dry or humid.

Plants affected by charcoal rot will exhibit symptoms halfway through their growing season with wilting and collapse of the leaves.

"There are currently no effective treatments against this pathogen and due to the long survival of the spores of this fungi in the soil, crop rotation or leaving areas fallow are not an attractive optin," says Dr Uwe.

In the photo above, you can see plates with charcoal rot (dark, grey areas) and the biological control (clear parts of the plate). The areas surrounding the biological control indicate regions free of fungal growth where it has stopped the developmenet of the pathogen.

Welcoming Emily Harrison as National Commercial Sales Manager

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Emily Harrison to the position of National Commercial Sales Manager with Neutrog.

Having grown up on a family farm at Garfield near Warragul in Victoria, Emily naturally grew an interest in agribusiness and servicing agriculture and horticulture industries.

Her 10 years with Nutrien in various roles followed by almost 9 years with E&E Muir & Sons, has equipped Emily with a lifetime of experience that will no doubt be of great value as she pursues this new role with Neutrog.

As Commercial Sales Manager, Emily will be working closely with the commercial team to create and grow opportunities for Neutrog and its customers across the commercial market.