THE POOH BAH NEWS

Dear Pooh Bah Club subscribers,

With a warm and unusually humid start to the new year, it has been a busy time in the garden to keep on top of all the growth and support plants with all the nutrients they need. High humidity creates ideal conditions for fungal diseases to thrive, so monitor your garden closely and treat any struggling areas with POPUL8.

It's no secret that happy, healthy, and well-nourished plants are more resistant to temperature stress, pests and disease which is why we recommend summer fertilising as part of your year-round program. If you're yet to feed your plants this season, click the link at the end of this newsletter to view our latest planting and fertilising guide for the month of February.

2024 is sure to be packed with plenty of great gardening stories, and this month we're kicking things off with an outstanding lawn transformation in Marananga SA, an Armillaria research update from the lab, progress from the ongoing SALIV8 trials at the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, and much more.

Stay in touch with Neutrog throughout the month via our social media pages. Our community holds a wealth of information, and our team are always happy to answer any product or garden queries you may have.

Happy gardening!
The Neutrog Team

Photo of the Month

Penny's Outstanding Lawn Transformation

Lawns can be fickle, and keeping your patch healthy and green year round can often come with hidden challenges. With the right balance of moisture, nutrition and microbiology, any lawn can become the most enviable on the street, and Penny from Marananga, SA has demonstrated exactly that.

In late 2023, Penny's lawn was hydrophobic and in need of some much needed TLC.

"I thought it was a thatch issue originally as water would just run off and wouldn't sink in, and brown patches were left after mowing. I reached out to Neutrog to ask how to fix the problem biologically," said Penny.

After some friendly advice from our resident lawn expert, Paul Dipuglia, she put Seamungus Lawn and Sudden Impact for Lawns + POPUL8 to the test.

"A lovely man from Neutrog assisted me, and on his advice I mowed VERY low down (down to the dust!). I then applied Seamungus Lawn and watered it in well. I hand watered the area the next day as well, and on the third day applied Sudden Impact for Lawns + POPUL8."

The combination of kelp, fish, humic acid and manure work together to promote plant and root growth. Kelps is recognised for its abilitu to both retain moisture and increase the moisture level of the plant's cell sap which is a key factor for a resilient lawn.

This, along with the full range of nutrients and diverse microbiology within Sudden Impact for Lawns + POPUL8, has provided Penny's lawn with the building blocks to recover and grow back stronger and more resilient to pests, heat and frost stress, and disease.

"I have surprised myself with how obsessed I've become with my lawn... I cant tell you how excited and thankful I am to see these results to my home's back lawn in just 26 days from using your products!"

The Australian Rhododendron Society (SA Branch) visit Neutrog

AAcross the year, Helen, Paul and Brian (who have collectively spent over 44 years working with Neutrog) visit every state in Australia, talking to community gardens, garden clubs and plant societies as well as delivering product training in nurseries and retail stores.

Their presentations are very relaxed and conversational, while still giving an insight into soil microbiology, the unique way our products are developed and manufactured and then into the practical side of gardening, with plenty of opportunity for questions on just about any gardening topic!

Bookings for talks in 2024 are already well underway, so if you are part of a group who'd be interested to hear how chicken poo turns into POPUL8 and everything in between, please or contact us via email at info@neutrog.com.au and we will be in touch.

Here is just some of the feedback we've received from clubs who have have had the opportunity to attend a presentation with one of our representatives.

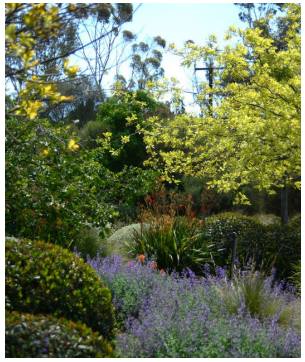


"Love having Brian visit the Rose Society of WA meetings. He is always very entertaining and full of great knowledge and ideas for our gardens. Thank you to Brian and the Neutrog team." says Jillian

"I have heard many of Helen's talks over the years and have enjoyed every one of them, her knowledge not only of Neutrog producers but of gardening in general is freely passed on. I hope I will be able to see her again during 2024, she has such a wonderful smile and infectious laugh." says Toni

A Colourful Summer at the Neutrog Factory





After a wet start to our summer, the Neutrog gardens have been looking better than ever with blooms and greenery reaching every corner of the garden.

The gardens have been designed by Catnik Design Studio and are maintained on a regular basis by the team at Adelaide Hills Lawns & Gardens Adelaide.

We are excited for the Catnik team to return in 2024 as we begin the development of the Education and Research Centre and adjacent sensory garden.

Naturally, Neutrog products are used over the current gardens and lawns including our Advanced Biological Liquids such as GOGO Juice and Seamungus, allowing the garden to withstand the recent rains and the summer conditions.

Product of the Month

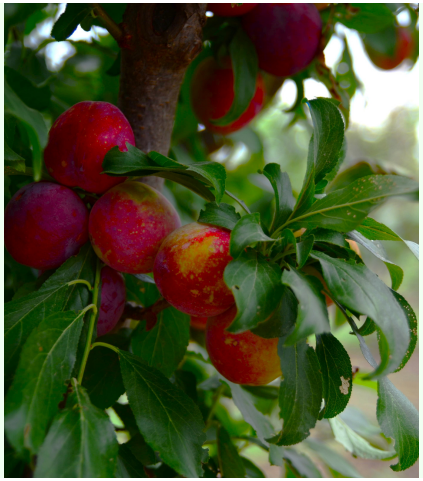
Gyganic for Veggies, Fruit & Citrus

Gyganic for Veggies, Fruit & Citrus is a premium biologically based, chemically boosted fertiliser developed specifically to meet the needs of all vegetable, fruit and citrus plants. Having been expertly and rigorously tested by members of the Rare Fruit Society of South Australia (RFSSA) before its release, Gyganic is also one of our most trusted products for backyard vegetable gardeners, orchard managers and commercial growers across Australia.

The RFSSA is a South Australian-based group of over a thousand fruit and citrus enthusiasts, including a number of members who are state, national and world authorities on fruit and citrus growing. A large part of their focus is on the preservation of rare and endangered species of fruit trees. After the success of Sudden Impact for Roses with rose societies across Australia, the group approached Neutrog to develop a fertiliser to meet the specific needs of fruit and citrus plants.

Trials first began with a product called 'Total Impact' which was a horticultural fertiliser in Neutrog's commercial range, but it soon became clear that members were supplementing their feeding program with other applications such as kelp, seaweed, humates and various bacterial inoculants. This inspired Neutrog to modify the fertiliser to include GOGO Juice to create a product that not only supplies a complete range of nutrients but also boosts beneficial bacteria.

This product is known today as Gyganic for Veggies, Fruit & Citrus.



RECOMMENDED BY THE RARE FRUIT SOCIETY S.A INC.

This new and improved product proved immensely popular among RFSSA members - so much so, the group have endorsed the product ever since. We have since partnered with the group to establish the Rare Fruit Arboretum at Neutrog's Kanmantoo factory, housing species of rare and endangered fruit trees, including apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, figs and quinces. Gyganic is used throughout the arboretum, and is a key component of the year round fertilising programme.

Rosa Viridiflora

Preparing for Bare Root Roses

Most will recognise a rose, but there is one particularly unusual variety capable of tricking even the most experienced rose grower. Rosa Viridiflora, otherwise known as the 'Green Rose', has no petals, no scent and takes a curious eye to recognise its connection to the rose.

The green rose flowers in flushes and in large clusters throughout the season. The entirely green appearance is the result of a chance genetic mutation that caused complete replacement of the flower petals with leaf sepals.

These roses are just one of many bare root varieties that would make a great addition to your garden. Garden nurseries will soon have bare root roses in stock, so now is an ideal time to have a look through the rose catalogues and make your selections for planting later in the year.

Sandra Turner, President of the Rose Society of Victoria tells us, "It is such a joy to pore over rose catalogues and decide which ones I will be planting in my garden. That, and readying my soil for when they arrive. Seamungus and GOGO Juice are my go-to's for preparation and it settles the new plants in beautifully."

A bare rooted rose is a plant supplied without foliage, flowers or soil around the roots. This can only be done when the plants are in their winter dormancy (they are effectively asleep), and are ideally planted between late May and the end of August.

Before planting, establish an area in your garden where you plan to plant them. This location needs to get at least 6 hours of sunlight a day, and needs to be positioned away from any other established shrubs or trees.

When planting a rose where an old rose was removed, the Rose Society of Victoria recommends replacing a wheelbarrow load of old soil with fresh soil to avoid Rose-Sick disease. Dig in plenty of well-rotted compost or manure, Seamungus pellets and water with GOGO Juice to add beneficial bacteria and fungi to the soil.

You can read more of their recommendations in the Rose Culture Notes on our website here.

R&D Partner

Armillaria research continues with the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

In 2023 Neutrog became a part of an Armillaria Alliance alongside the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and botanic gardens from every state in Australia to explore opportunities to reduce the impacts of the fungal plant pathogen, Armillaria, commonly known as 'Honey Fungus'.

Armillaria species are recognised as significant garden pathogens and are responsible for plant health decline and mortality within the living collections at Cranbourne gardens. *Armillaria luteobubalina* is of particular concern as it is an extremely destructive fungi which can bring about the death of even mature trees.

Neutrog welcomed the team from the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne to the Neutrog factory and laboratory mid last year and have since continued research into possible controls for the pathogen, which has made significant progress since our last update.

Neutrog R&D Manager, Dr Uwe Stroeher says, "What we have done at Neutrog is obtain soil samples from areas of the garden at Cranbourne known to have Armillaria, as well as areas which are devoid of the pathogen."

The pathogen was isolated from the soil and tissue samples and grown on plates. Armillaria is slow growing which made this step problematic, however the below photos show *Armillaria luteobubalina* from one of the garden sites.

A theory from the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne was that Armillaria is more prevalent in areas of the garden where the soil has been disturbed. To test this theory, samples were taken from areas of the garden where the soil had not been disturbed to be tested, with the findings showing the presence of eight potential inhibitors of Armillaria and therefore proving the theory to be true. In laboratory settings, these isolates have stopped the growth of *Armillaria luteobubalina*.

"The next step is to identify the microbes that can act as a biological control agent against this pathogen, grow them and introduce them into the gardens to hopefully reduce the disease burden. We still have further work to do, but there is certainly a glimmer of hope on the horizon," says Dr Uwe.

Neutrog are currently undertaking a trial with the Adelaide Botanic Garden at Mount Lofty to see if the flavour of capsicums and tomatoes can be improved with microbes.

The trial involves two varieties of each plant, each being assessed with a selection receiving water only, and the rest receiving a biological inoculant currently under development, called SALIV8.

SALIV8 is a formula comprising specifically chosen microbes that the Neutrog R&D team believe will enhance flavour.

"The ability to enhance flavours, and potentially nutritional value, by the use of a microbial inoculant represents an exciting opportunity not only for the home gardener but also in the commercial setting" Dr Uwe Stroeher, R&D Manager.

A second application of SALIV8 was applied in mid-January.

"We are at the early stages of the trial and so far we have seen a slight improvement in the treated plants compared to the control groups. Within the next two to three months, we will hopefully be able to harvest the fruits and then do a blind taste test to see if the biological inoculant does in fact improve the flavour of the produce."

◀ Tomato plants from the trial. Three plants on the left have been treated with SALIV8, whereas the three plants on the right have been untreated.

Sundrop Farms

Exploring the Food Production Facility in Port Augusta, SA

You can learn more about the facilities and operations at Sundrop Farms in the video below:

Last month, members of Neutrog's R&D and commercial teams had the opportunity to tour one of the most cutting-edge food production facilities in South Australia called Sundrop Farms.

Sundrop Farms is based in Port Augusta SA which enjoys around 300 days of sun per year. Sundrop Farms harnesses this solar energy, for the 20 hectares of greenhouses to produce around 16,000 tonnes of tomatoes annually, exclusively for Coles.

The farm integrates solar power, electricity generation, fresh water conservation and production, climate control and hydroponics to enable year-round sustainable production. 23,000 mirrors direct the sun towards a 127m high tower to generate heat which is used to generate electricity via a turbine to power various farm systems, and to desalinate water drawn from the nearby Spencer Gulf to produce fresh water to water the plants.

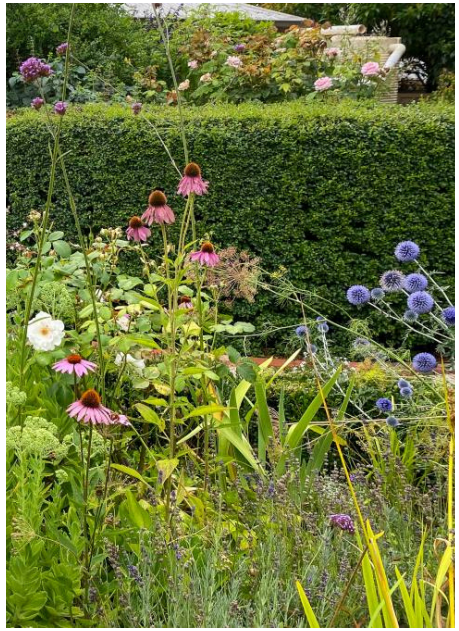
Through the implementation of renewable energy practices the farm has little reliance on fossil fuels, setting a big example for future food producers.

The Neutrog team met with Steve Marafiote, Frank Chevalier and James Cossington from Sundrop Farms as Neutrog explore biological product development for large scale hydroponic use.

They took our team through the production process, where seedlings arrive as 45 day old plants from WA which are then grafted onto a wild tomato variety. There are a total of 800,000 individual plants at any given time, and if the rows were placed end to end they would measure a total of 106km. 98% of the fruit produced is saleable.

PunkiPot

A Captivating Garden in Strathalbyn, SA



With the imaginative eye of an artist and the green thumb of a keen gardener, Lou Ramsay and resourceful partner Ian have created a garden they call PunkiPot. Like its intriguing name, it is charming and unique!

The layout of the large block has been carefully considered to maximise its functionality and every bit is crammed with interest and variety. Close to the house are sheltered spots for outdoor living and in the surrounding garden, hedges create secluded little areas, each with its own purpose and individual style.

In the exuberantly planted garden beds, colourful flowering plants mingle with the foliage and textures of water-efficient Mediterranean and Australian natives as well as productive plants and fruit trees. A mini flower meadow attracts bees and pollinating insects and a pretty pond provides a welcome water source for wildlife.

Along the winding driveway, which cleverly hides the house from the road, are a number of structures built using recycled and repurposed materials. The spacious duck house is fortified, the chook palace is constructed and fox-proofed using discarded tennis court fencing, there is a very cute potting shed and a vividly painted, cornflower blue 'she-shed' surrounded with a complementing picket fence.

A covered orchard protects a variety of fruit trees as well as being a safe spot for the ducks to wander. Several areas with raised or wicking beds, also resourcefully made from salvaged water tanks and other discarded items, grow a wide selection of vegetables allowing the owners a degree of self-sufficiency.

These quirky little buildings along with the owners' sculpture, their vivid garden art and the flowering plants that pop up wherever there is a space, give the garden an eclectic and individual character.

PunkiPot is captivating, creative, clever and climate compatible - a garden that is much loved and enjoyed by the owners.

Neutrog products are used throughout the garden, and by visiting this weekend you will have the opportunity to enter the draw to win some Neutrog products for your own garden.

Cows for Cambodia

Making a change, one pellet at a time

Since its inception, Cows for Cambodia have dedicated themselves to ending rural poverty in some of the world's poorest communities, using a 'cow bank' to establish a better future for those in need.

Each year the charity's founder, Andrew 'Cosi' Costello hosts tours offering regular Australians an opportunity to explore Cambodia and lend a helping hand with the work being done at the charity. Guests are completely immersed in the village culture as they assist with rice runs, building projects, and work closely with the charity's village farm and school.

Neutrog have supported Cows for Cambodia for some time, and we were thrilled to receive these photos from a recent volunteer tour late last year showing a glimpse of how these South Australian fertilisers are making a positive impact overseas.

The eager volunteers worked together to spread Bounce Back and Rapid Raiser the 'old fashioned' way - by hand - over the cattle fields, encouraging a nutritious base for pasture to thrive and produce plenty for the cows to graze on.

A cow in Cambodia costs families around $1,000 which is almost impossible for most to achieve. Cows for Cambodia's 'cow bank' designed to loan a pregnant cow to families in need to care for. Once the calf is born, the family get to keep the calf and the cow returns to the farm.

To learn more about Cows for Cambodia and to donate, visit their website
www.cowsforcambodia.com

Australian Native Arboretum

Sturt's Desert Pea Varieties Coming to the Arboretum

Sturt's Desert Peas, or Swainsona formosa, are a unique Australian bloom and floral symbol for South Australia. Most people would describe them as being a brilliant red colour with a black eye, however Greg Kirby, past President of the Australian Plant Society of South Australia (APSSA) tells us they exist in an array of different colours.

Greg is heavily involved with the activities with the APSSA and has played a huge role in the establishment of the Australian Native Plant Arboretum with Neutrog in Kanmantoo. The new arboretum is growing beautifully and the plan is to add some of these colourful varieties of Sturt's Desert Pea.

Greg says, "You cannot start to raise the seeds until the weather is regularly sitting above 25C. I'll be starting off the seeds in tubes rather than seeding directly into the soil. The reason for this is if they begin germinating, the snails will be all over them. Therefore, planting out when of a suitable size will ensure success.

"I'll use a free draining growing media suitable for Australian natives, and once germinated I'll apply a solution of Seamungus. I'm also looking forward to using the new Bush Tucker Advanced Biological Formula on them once planted out into the arboretum."

New plants in the arboretum coincides with a number of other maintenance projects including the completion of the fences, addition of an irrigation system and regular weed maintenance.

We can't wait to show you the Australian Native Plant Arboretum as it progresses.

Year round fertilising for year round health

We hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you'd like to stay in touch with Neutrog, we encourage you to like and follow our Facebook and Instagram pages using the links below, and tune into Neutrog TV (hosted by YouTube) where you can find a range of videos as well as copies of Dr Uwe's weekly chats with Graham Ross.

See you in March!
The Neutrog Team

Our Partners

Over the years Neutrog has collaborated with many plant societies that have trialled and subsequently endorsed some of our products. These product endorsements provide retail staff and home gardeners with the confidence to use and recommend Neutrog products.

With a combined membership base of over 10,000, some of these endorsing societies include:

We never have enough room in our newsletters to share all of our inspirational stories and tips from our gardening community, but they do appear on our Facebook and Instagram pages regularly...why not join us there?