

Tech Shares

Managing Highly Alkaline Irrigation Water

New fertilizer formulations offer plant nutrition and help manage water quality.

By: Fred Hulme, Ph.D., Adapted from published article in Greenhouse Management, February 2013

Ornamental growers have long struggled with managing growing media pH. Maintaining correct growing media pH is critical for many crops especially if production time is greater than six to eight weeks. When media pH rises excessively, micronutrients become less available and young leaves on affected plants turn chlorotic (Figure 1). The most frequent cause of high root-zone pH is highly alkaline irrigation water.

The first step in understanding raising media pH is to test the water and determine the level of alkalinity. If the level is high, Peters Excel® pHLow®, using technology based on PeKacid neutralizes bicarbonates in high alkaline waters to keep the pH stable while keeping injectors and drip lines clear of mineral deposits. Growers need to simultaneously provide proper nutrition for their crops and manage irrigation water alkalinity (maintaining growing media pH control). Peters® Excel pHLow®, is the ICL Specialty Fertilizer water soluble fertilizer line that feeds your plants and manages your pH at ideal growing levels. Contact your ICL Specialty Fertilizer territory manager or one of our distributors for more information.

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Figure 1. Micronutrient deficiency due to high growing media pH

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