

Subject: Growing Undercover - April 26

Date: Tuesday, 28 April 2026 at 9:30:58 am Australian Central Standard Time

From: PCA

To: Jade Lewis



GROWING UNDERCOVER

APRIL | 2026

UPDATES

IDO Update

Matt Plunkett

Welcome to the April edition of Growing Undercover.

Recently, Rabobank released its annual greenhouse report for 2026 entitled "Global Greenhouse Update."

Interestingly, but not surprisingly post COVID and with the recent Middle Eastern conflict, Governments are moving toward self-sufficiency first largely driven by the need for sovereign food security.

Growth in greenhouse production is also being driven by climate change and supply chain issues notwithstanding the global suppliers in our industry see international growth being more cautious over the coming year.

Rapid technological advancements such as AI and Robotics are scaling in the northern hemisphere coupled with better crop genetics and growing methods/systems. This change is well underway here in Australia with many growers looking at alternate crops, transitioning to renewable energy and de-coupling from fossil fuels such as gas.

Much of the research and development undertaken in the Protected Cropping Research and Development program is looking at these new innovations and technologies that are fit for purpose for Australian conditions. PCA hope to share more project updates over the coming year and at our PCA 2027 conference.

That said, the recent Middle Eastern crisis has shown that fossil fuels reserves, in a time of global uncertainty is vital for continued domestic production. The issue of energy reserves must

be front and centre in any National Food Security Strategy that the Australian Government announced last year.

The growth of data centres generating heat to power high tech glasshouses for food production around the world is well underway and the concept is gaining interest here in Australia to.

Whilst traditional crops such as the tomato category are still mainstream around the world and here in Australia, strawberries and leafy greens are emerging as key growth categories.

Blueberry production is also expanding in other parts of the world due to higher yields, automation and better genetics.

In the berry category more broadly here in Australia, we are seeing more growers transition from soil-based production systems into substrate grown systems. This is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

It is fair to say that nonmainstream crops are still niche in Australia noting we do have a small medicinal cannabis and vertical farming industry. In addition, the Australian industry has also seen crops such as table grapes moving to some form of protection. Avocados, citrus and cherries are looking at growing systems and structures that mitigate risk in a changing climate.

Have a great month and stay safe.

EVENTS

JUNE



National Agritech Week 2026 - Brisbane

[Learn More →](#)

MAY

Plant Empowerment Hort Innovation
Frontiers

Apex Greenhouses training event

7th May 2026

About the course
An introduction to the principles of Plant Empowerment

Location: Powerplants Australia (VIC)
Time: 8:30am - 3:30pm
Cost: \$250.00+GST
• **Lunch will be provided**
Please note numbers for this training session are limited

Plant Empowerment training supports growers to create greenhouse conditions where plants can actively regulate their own processes by balancing energy, climate and crop needs.

This full-day session introduces key Plant Empowerment principles before moving into a range of focus areas relevant across greenhouse systems, with flexibility to address grower questions and needs throughout the day.

For more information please contact
Anita Chennell | anita.chennell@ahf.com.au

Course facilitator
Ton Habraken
Greenhouse Climate Expert



Ton brings a wealth of knowledge across areas such as advanced greenhouse climate control, plant physiology and plant responses to climate, and using data to inform decision-making. This includes practical approaches to maintaining an active and uniform crop, ventilation strategies, and translating sensor data into meaningful insights, along with key concepts underpinning climate and energy balance.

Previous participants rated the training 4.5/5, with 76% saying it exceeded expectations.



Scan to register



ahf.com.au

The Growing Horticulture through predicted supply innovation project (AGS3001) is funded through Hort Innovation. Funding was provided to the project from Hort Innovation Research Fund. Industry Stakeholders: The Greenhouse Apex Greenhouses, The Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), HortPro and contributions from the Australian Government.

Apex Greenhouses  **ahf** 

Apex Greenhouses Training Event - Plant Empowerment

[Learn More →](#)

OCTOBER

Myplant & Garden Middle East
Save the date: **October 21–22–23, 2026**
Dubai Exhibition Centre (UAE)



Myplant & Garden Middle East has opened a new chapter for the global green industry. In Dubai, **business, innovation, sustainability, and international networking** came together to create a unique event for the worldwide floriculture and nursery market, as well as for the future of landscape and urban sustainability.

The success of the first edition – the only exhibition in the Middle East dedicated to landscape and ornamental greenery – was made possible thanks to the active participation, strong interest, and high-quality dialogue

Myplant & Garden Middle East

[Learn More →](#)

MAY



North Coast Farming Forum - Climate Adaptive Agriculture

[Learn More →](#)

JUNE



Dear Matt Plunkett,

Make your visit to GreenTech Amsterdam on 9-11 June even more valuable and be inspired by the knowledge programme, developed in partnership with industry-leading speakers and partners. On the exhibition, the latest horticulture insights come to life. Explore a selection of solutions taking place this year and [secure your ticket](#) to reserve your spot.

Tuesday 9 June 2026

12:00 AM – 12:45 AM | Climate-Resilient Greenhouses: Country-Specific Strategies for a Hotter, Drier, and Wilder World

In this follow-up to last year's highly attended session on climate change and extreme weather, we dive deeper with a comparative look at horticultural regions: The Netherlands, Spain, Saudi Arabia, and more. Featuring: Athanasios Sapounas (TNO).

02:00 PM - 02:45 PM | Substrates of the future

This session brings substrate innovators together to discuss how they are successfully moving away from traditional media, without losing yield or increasing their operational risk. Featuring: Kyle Freedman (Jiffy Group), Peter Melis (Proefcentrum Hoogstraten), and Hans Kristian Westrum (SoilSteam).

GreenTech Amsterdam - Secure Your Ticket

[Learn More →](#)

MAY



Hydroponic Farmers Federation

CONFERENCE 2026

Protected Crops -

Doing More with less

4th - 6th May 2026

Pullman Hotel, Albert Park, Melbourne



Don't miss out! The 2026 Hydroponic Farmers Federation Conference is set to bring together growers, innovators, and industry leaders for three inspiring days of learning, networking, and discovery.

Running from the 4th to the 6th of May, the event will be held at the Pullman Hotel in Melbourne's Albert Park area.

Registrations are open, and if you are a grower and are interested in a substantially subsidised \$55.00 registration fee, please contact one of the participating exhibitors for more information.

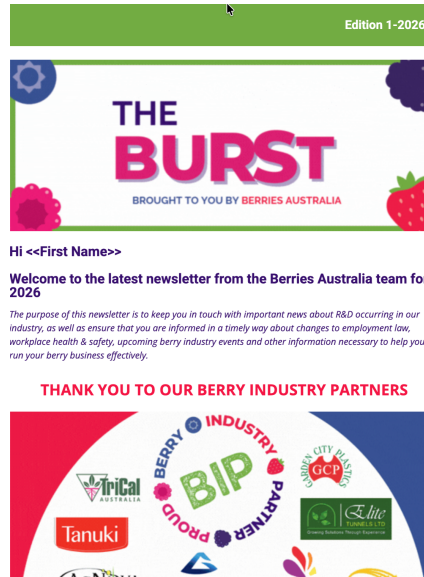
Full details of the conference program and a list of exhibitors can be found at <https://pecbookings.eventsair.com/hff2026>

[Learn More →](#)

INFORMATION

NATIONAL

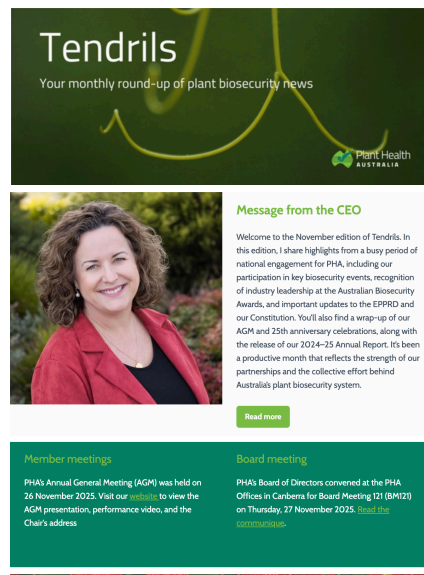
NEWS



Berries Australia - The Burst April 2026

[Learn More →](#)

NEWS



PHA - Tendrils Newsletter April 2026

[Learn More →](#)

SURVEY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Digital Irrigated Agriculture Workforce Futures -

Principal Investigators: Prof Leigh Schmidtke Gulbe
Sturt University
Prof Lena Danaia School of Education, Faculty of A
Charles Sturt University

Researchers: Dr Pauline Rogers Charles Sturt Univ
Sturt University, Dr Pratikshya Kandel University of
Cleary SuniTAFE.

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study on
Agriculture Workforce Futures. The study is being c
above-named researchers from the Gulbali Institute
Education at the Charles Sturt University, the Scho

Digital Irrigated Agriculture Workforce Futures - Survey

[Learn More →](#)

NEWS

20
Apr
2026

Delphy Academy Tra Horticulture

Events/Announcements, Fertiliser



In this online training (English spoken) you will learn about the aspects of nutrients and fertigation, how to read an analysis, and make adjustments to the fertilizer recipe. Calculation of your A or B tank filling from a recipe. The uptake of water and nutrients by the plant and the relationship with pH and EC.

Delphy Academy Training – Fertigation in Horticulture

[Learn More →](#)

NEWS



Dear Matt Plunkett,

From climate-positive cultivation to the future of indoor farming, this issue explores how horticulture is reinventing itself. We spotlight Koppert C's ambition to capture more CO₂ than it emits, hear leading voices on the scaling challenges of CEA and vertical farming, and dive into the latest LED lighting research shaping tomato production. This month's newsletter offers you practical insights, bold ideas, and a clear focus on what's important.



'We are capturing more CO₂ than we use'

Alongside cresses and edible flowers, Koppert Cress contributes to the future of horticulture through practical solutions. With full Scope 3 CO₂ calculations, geothermal energy saving 400,000 m³ of gas annually, and innovations developed via its spin-off Division Q, sustainability is built into the core of the business.

GreenTech March 2026 Newsletter

[Learn More →](#)

RESOURCES


Supporting the needs of industry with mapping tools. [Craig Shephard](#) is a land-use mapping expert and Senior Researcher within the [Applied Agricultural Remote Sensing Centre \(AARSC\)](#), playing an instrumental role alongside Prof. [Andrew Robson](#) in creating Australia's first map of protected cropping systems.

In the following clip, Craig outlines his experience in land-use mapping and the development of the Australian Tree Crop Map, noting that industry feedback showed it needed richer information. This led to a new project, building on the Protected Cropping Map, to enable tree crop industries to create more detailed, fit-for-purpose spatial maps.

To learn more and to watch our full video with the AARSC mapping team, click here: <https://lnkd.in/gq7m7mnr>

[#treecrops](#) [#spatialmapping](#) [#remotesensing](#) [#mapping](#)

The Australian Protected Cropping Map Dashboard is a collaboration led by [Hort Innovation](#) and the [University of New England \(AU\)](#)'s Applied Agricultural Remote Sensing Centre (AARSC), alongside [Protected Cropping Australia LTD](#), NSW Local Land Services, industry bodies and Future Food Systems.



Protected Cropping Mapping Project

[Learn More →](#)

MEMBER ADVERTISEMENTS

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APRIL 2026

WHO SETS THE RULES IN PLANT RETAIL?
Growers carry the cost when expectations shift
PLANT RETAIL UNDER PRESSURE
Shifting value, tighter margins, and grower reality

REDEFINED AT RETAIL LEVEL
From sustainability demands to supply chain risk

PLANT RETAIL: WHERE THE TERMS ARE SET

How power, sustainability, and risk are being redefined across the supply chain

APEX GREENHOUSES TRAINING EVENT - PLANT EMPOWERMENT

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bit.ly/4slvI56

The Growing horticulture through protected cropping innovation project (AS23001) is funded through Hort Innovation Frontiers with co-investment from Applied Horticultural Research (AHR), Flavorite Hydroponic Tomatoes, The Costa Group, Apex Greenhouses, The Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), PolyBee and contributions from the Australian Government.

[Unsubscribe](#)

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