



GROWING UNDERCOVER

OCTOBER | 2025

UPDATES

IDO Update

Matt Plunkett

Welcome to the October edition of Growing Undercover.

Here in NSW, growers are experiencing above average temperatures with dry conditions persisting up and down much of the eastern seaboard. In Victoria and South Australia, it has been a typical spring with variable weather patterns. The main growing region of Virginia in South Australia has received widespread rain in the last week.

In latest news, a big congratulations to all the team at the Department of Primary Industries Queensland for the successful launch of the Protected Cropping Centre for Mild Winter Climates. This new research, development and extension facility was opened earlier this month as part of the biennial Gatton Ag Tech showcase and is a great asset for our industry to run trials, demonstrate innovations and undertake training in sub-tropical protected cropping systems.

The team are preparing a membership and marketing campaign to be rolled out over the coming months. This includes promoting some of our corporate and grower members and the benefits of being a member of your peak industry body. Stay tuned for more information and please reach out if your keen to promote the benefits of being a PCA member.

PCA are continuing our engagement with the Australian Building Codes Board to find practical options for assisting our members in this area. Unfortunately, due to changing Government priorities, horticultural buildings will not have a discrete classification, nor will any industry funding be forthcoming to advance our work. Our attention will now turn to reviewing the study undertaken on fire and egress with the view to developing practical resources to assist our members and corporate partners dealing with consent authorities.

Organising of the Greentech tour to Europe next year is gathering pace with over 30 Expressions of Interest received. PCA are hoping to apply for levy funding for growers and talking with other peak industry bodies, sponsors and hope to make further announcements soon.

For all our members, particularly in Victoria, the ARC Research Hub for Intelligent Energy Efficiency in Future Protected Cropping will be officially launched on the 13th of November and held at RMIT University City Campus (details in the events section of this edition for details).

PCA is a partner of this hub which is designed to pioneer solutions in renewable energy amongst other initiatives.

Have a great month and stay safe.



ANDREW TOUT



ANDREW MCILWAIN



ZAK IQBAL



JACK MOONEY



ALASTAIR MCLEAN



ELIO JOVICICH



MICHAEL SIMONETTA



BEN HOODLESS



ALASTAIR DELOOZE

MEET OUR PEOPLE

EVENTS

JUNE

GREENTECH & NL INDUSTRY TOUR 2026



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Protected Cropping Australia are seeking expressions of interest from PCA members who would be keen to participate in a study tour trip that would take in a visit to the Greentech 2026 expo and key industry and farm sites in the Westland area of the Netherlands. The event itself is aiming to provide an insight into the latest technologies and developments in the protected cropping industry.

The Greentech event is in itself - massive! With some 550 trade stands and a packed lecture program, the event is certain to provide interest for all growers. For more details on the Greentech itself, please feel free to visit the link shown to provide more insight into this event - <https://youtu.be/SS16-13dUT8>

Preliminary discussions have revealed strong support from key industry players to facilitate site and generic industry visits. These companies include Rijk Zwaan, Priva and Grodan to name but a few. We anticipate that the tour would be based around the Amsterdam region to facilitate easy access to the Greentech and also provide a central meeting point for the tour. Once we have

Greentech & NL Industry Tour 2026 EOI

[Learn More →](#)

NOVEMBER

WEBINAR WEDNESDAY

MANAGING INVASIVE SERPENTINE LEAFMINER PROTECTED CROPPING

Wednesday the 26th of November at 4:00pm

Serpentine Leafminer (*Liriomyza huidobrensis*) is an invasive pest that threatens Australian horticultural industries, especially in protected cropping. This webinar features presentations from experts working in the Hort Innovation funded project, using the part of the Hort Frontiers program initiative developed by Hort Innovation, with co-investment from Macquarie University and the Australian Government, 'Behavioural and biological management of serpentine leafminers in protected cropping systems (BY22001)', showcasing progress in the development of sustainable control approaches:

Colour and model trap development — a novel trap combining colour, shape and scent for improved monitoring and control.

Novel attractants and repellents — identification of volatiles to support lure-and-kill and **ultrasonic vibration (vibrational mating disruption)** — testing substrate-borne signals to disrupt mating.

Biological control — evaluation of parasitoids such as *Neochrysocharis formosa* and their role in managing SLM.

The webinar will discuss findings, practical implications for growers, and next steps toward developing more resilient protected-cropping systems.

Dr. David Denlinger brings applied entomological expertise across multiple pest taxa, including key biosecurity threats such as Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, Fall Armyworm, and *Liriomyza* spp. His research focuses on understanding of insect physiology and survivability, and informs the development of alternative control strategies. He also leads major Australian IPDM programs for avocado and macadamia, working with governments on pest prioritisation, preparedness, and risk mitigation.

Dr. David Denlinger is a chemical scientist specializing in chemical ecology and sustainable pest management. He is involved in the development of novel plant-derived attractants, repellents, and toxicants, integrating electrophysiological, and behavioural approaches to advance pest control solutions for horticultural crops.

Dr. Denlinger is an applied entomologist experienced in managing diverse pests and pathogens in

Webinar - Serpentine Leafminer

[Learn More →](#)

DECEMBER



FFS - End Of Year Networking Event

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NOVEMBER



RMCG Cut Flower Webinar Series

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INFORMATION

NATIONAL

NEWS



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Date:
28 October 2025

Media release:
For immediate release

A 30-year leadership legacy at Rijk Zwaan concludes as Steven Roberts hands over to Peter Smith

After three decades with Rijk Zwaan, Steven Roberts is stepping down as Business Manager, Oceania. He hands his responsibilities for the management of 80 staff across the region to Peter Smith, former CEO of Boomaroo Nurseries from November 2025.

Since joining Rijk Zwaan as a Sales Representative for NSW in 1995, Steven has helped shape innovations that changed the way Australians grow and eat vegetables.

From truss tomatoes and Salanova® lettuce to Blue Leaf™ cucumbers and the waste-saving Know™ trait, he has helped introduce varieties and concepts that have not only transformed production and retail shelves, but also inspired people to enjoy more vegetables.

An advocate of the vegetable industry and the importance of increasing consumption, Steven founded Love My Salad (now Veggies First), a long-running social platform that continues to evolve, inspire, and celebrate the joy of vegetables.

During his 15 years as Business Manager, Steven has led the Oceania team through strong commercial growth, heading up a nationwide team of sales representatives that has established Rijk Zwaan as a trusted partner for growers.

"Seeing Rijk Zwaan products on supermarket shelves, in restaurants and in friends' homes, knowing we helped bring vegetables like baby cucumbers and so many others to life is a real achievement," says Steven.

"What I'm most proud of is our team, and the growers who bring our seeds to life – they are the true heart of our success," he says.

During Steven's tenure, the Australian subsidiary has established itself as an integral part of Dutch-based global company, Rijk Zwaan – one of the top four vegetable breeding companies in the world.

Peter Smith steps into the position after eight years in senior roles with Boomaroo, one of Australia's largest vegetable seedling producers. He brings more than 20 years of experience leading and growing businesses in manufacturing and operations, and has strong existing relationships with growers across the region.

Peter joins Tim Marsh, Business Manager for Oceania and South Asia, responsible for R&D activities, as the new leadership team of Rijk Zwaan Oceania.

Rijk Zwaan Australia Pty Ltd | A/CN 654 393 902 | A/BN 34 654 393 902
The General Terms and Conditions of Sale and Delivery of Rijk Zwaan Australia Pty Ltd apply to all offers and sales agreements. Terms and Conditions can be viewed on rijkzwaan.com.au.

30-Year Leadership Legacy At Rijk Zwaan Concludes

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NEWS



Tendrils

Your monthly round-up of plant biosecurity news





Message from the CEO

This month, as we celebrate 20 years of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD), I'm reminded of the strength that comes from genuine partnerships. The EPPRD continues to underpin Australia's national biosecurity system and is a testament to what can be achieved when governments and industries work side by side. This month, that spirit of collaboration has been on full display. We've launched the new Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA) Quick Guide designed to assist broadacre cropping areas with preparedness effort and delivered national exercises to test plant industries readiness and coordination. Each of these initiatives demonstrates how connected, capable partners keep our biosecurity system strong, adaptive, and ready for what lies ahead.

[Read more](#)

Member meetings

PHAS Member meetings will be held from 24-26 November at the East Hotel in Canberra. An invitation with registration details has been sent to all Members, and the [agenda](#) is now available online. Please [register](#) your attendance by close of business on Friday 7 November using the links provided in the invitation.

Plant Health Australia - Tendrils October

[Learn More →](#)

NEWS



The latest horticulture technology insights

 **GreenTech**
14,314 followers

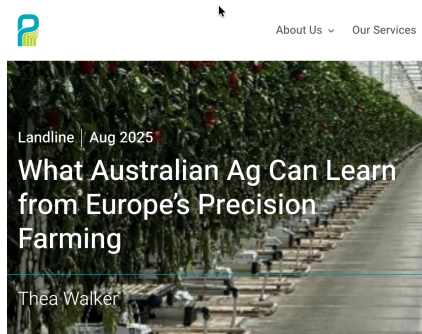
October 29, 2025

Nature meets innovation, as growers and farmers worldwide are seeking chemical agents for seaweed-based bio stimulants. Crop specialists Gordon-Smith and Filip van Noort are also reimagining the future of agriculture by experimenting with new crop types and tackling the challenges with precision cultivation. And in a surprising development, coffee is being grown in soil, offering a local solution to global sustainability challenges. Explore these inspiring stories in this newsletter.

GreenTech - Horticulture Happenings

[Learn More →](#)

NEWS



"Tech doesn't fix a bad farmer – it makes the best farmer better" Kristian Møller

Imagine a guaranteed 70% reduction in chemical costs, a 20% increase in productivity, and the ability to make 35% more money than any other farmer growing the same crop. This is a situation many farmers wouldn't hesitate to pass up, but in Europe, the use of technology in robotics and precision agriculture is already becoming reality, and not by growing more, but by growing smarter.

Now, precision agriculture isn't anything new in Australia, and whilst Danish farmers are discovering what the term soil compaction means in their farming systems, technologies like precision rate application and drone mapping and spraying are already being successfully integrated into Australian farming systems, with impressive results. But what else is out there?

What Aus Ag Can Learn From EU's Precision Farming

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NEWS



Vitrum: Greenhouse For The Future

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MEMBER ADVERTISEMENTS

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OCTOBER 2025

RAISING THE STANDARD

**Plant Healthy On The Drive For
Stronger Biosecurity**

FRONTLINE DEFENDERS

**How Growers Protect Trade
Through Pest Prevention**

SAFEGUARDING THROUGH SCIENCE

**Experts Across Europe And
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PLANT HEALTH UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

From Prevention To Protection, How Growers Worldwide Are
Managing Biosecurity Risks



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