Soilless culture of hardy nursery stock

Henk van Reuler and Ton Baltissen
E-mail: henk.vanreuler@wur.nl

Introduction
The Dutch government needs to comply with European environmental legislation on the quality of ground- and surface water. Nurserymen want to produce high quality products at a competitive price. The challenge for Applied Plant Research is combining these targets.

Aim
Development of new sustainable cultivation systems for hardy nursery stock with minimal emission.

Results

Gutter system
Advantages: better growth, less emission, improved labour conditions, efficient water and nutrient use
Disadvantages: investment costs, environmental planning
The gutter system has proved to reduce emission substantially and to be economically sound. Five growers have invested in this system.

Avenue trees in big containers
Advantages: better growth, less emission, flexible harvesting
Disadvantages: not suitable for every species, environmental planning
Growing trees in big containers is rapidly adopted by growers.

Pot-in-pot
Advantages: better growth, easy harvesting, efficient water and nutrient use, plant do not topple
Disadvantages: suitable for plants up to 2 m length, investment costs
The pot-in-pot system is just installed and this season the research will start. The grower is confident that he will recover soon the costs on his investment.