

‘PLANTS LOOK FANTASTIC’

He looked at the report with the results of the microbiological analysis three times. But it was there: the bacterial count in the clean water tank went from 5,000 cfu/mL (colony-forming units per milliliter) to 560 cfu/mL. And the score for the return water was even more dramatic. There, the value dropped from 23,000 cfu/mL to 380 cfu/mL!

Tekst: Ton van der Vliet
Fotografie: Sharon Schouten

"And that after just ten days of testing with the Freshwater ionization system," says Michel Nagtegaal, a full-time employee at Moerings, Europe's largest and most authoritative aquatic plant nursery.

Nagtegaal has worked at Moerings since 1995, which markets approximately 7 million aquatic plants annually. "Water is crucial for us; an aquatic plant without water won't survive!"

Floating fish

Duckweed is a difficult problem to control in water lily cultivation. Sometimes spraying with iron can provide a solution, but at Moerings, they are extremely reluctant to do so. They opt for a fully sustainable approach, with natural solutions that prioritize biodiversity, environmental friendliness, and the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem. "Pesticides are not an option for us. If a customer puts one of our water lilies in their pond and then sees all the fish float to the surface, that's not good publicity, of course!" Moerings is already GAP and MPS certified and is now working hard to also obtain the Skal certificate, for companies that operate entirely organically. Contact with Freshwater came about through

Marcel van Helden (see box), who has been supplying plant material to Moerings for many years, says Nagtegaal: "We've known Marcel for years, so when he said he'd discovered something new to keep his water clean and was achieving good results, we were intrigued." Moerings has a total of approximately 15 hectares of growing space; about 12 hectares in Roosendaal plus a greenhouse in 's-Gravenzande. 9

For two reservoirs with a total capacity of 5,500 cubic meters, they purchased two pumps, which they installed in the reservoirs and ran 24/7 to produce their ionizing effect. This resulted in the astonishing results described above.

Nagtegaal contracted a renowned laboratory for the sampling, so he has no doubt that the ionizers are performing their duties effectively. "The results are also visually evident. The water is clear, we have much less green deposits, and the plants are simply fantastic."

Orders for two additional ionization pumps for two more basins have now been placed. "Ionization neutralizes pathogens and viruses and increases oxygen levels in the water. The latter is, in any case, incredibly beneficial for our plants."



‘KEEP THE GOOD’

Marcel van Helden is the director/owner of SAMAR Trading B.V. This garden plant wholesaler collaborates with a Chinese partner who cultivates plant material in several locations around Shanghai for growers in Europe. Marcel was introduced to Freshwater's ionization technology in 2024, and after seeing the initial results, it was clear to him: this is the solution to controlling water problems. We propagate our plant material exclusively vegetatively, and that method resulted in a considerable loss, especially with several species. This was partly because we decided to stop using pesticides in the nursery. For some species, the loss rate was as high as 20 or 30 percent. But since we started using ionization, both inline and with separate pumps in the tanks, that percentage has dropped to a negligible level! A truly amazing difference. When I saw that result, I immediately told Aad van der Starre (developer of Freshwater): 'That's something for all my customers.' That's how the collaboration between Freshwater and SAMAR Trading began

and this ionization technology has already been delivered to several customers."

Marcel has been in the business for over twenty-five years and has seen and tried many water purification techniques. "But ionization is, for me, the only system so far where you retain what's good and only eliminate the things you want to get rid of. Other methods eliminate everything! They make the water 'dead' and sterile. A living thing that remains in a sterile environment for too long doesn't develop an immune system. If you then remove it from that sterile environment, it becomes sick much faster. I now see that difference very clearly in our plants. Companies that disinfect everything to work as sterile as possible are increasingly encountering problems elsewhere in their production. With ionization, you keep your plants healthy. Root development in our plants has never been better, and our plants have never been so vital since we started using ionization."

