

COLORS.

MAGAZINE

GREEN LIGHT FOR GLOBAL GREEN

GOODBYE PLASTIC, HELLO PAPER!

FROM SENSITIVE FEET TO GREEN THUMBS

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COLORS MAGAZINE

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FOREWORD

SUSTAINABILITY IS KEY TO OUR FUTURE!

Lots of changes are all happening at the same time right now. Consider the scarcity of water, the energy prices, climate change, and increasingly tightened environmental standards. All of these developments put together can mean only one thing: as an entrepreneur, your business operations can never be sustainable enough. This is a dire necessity, in my opinion, and particularly true in a branch of industry as green as ours. Apart from that, embracing sustainability helps you save money.

This edition of Colors shines a spotlight on everything we do in terms of sustainability. When you look at many of these measures, you often don't even realize that they are related to the concept of sustainability. This actually makes me happy, because it means that they have become self-evident.

Sustainability is constant. At Sentinel, we always remain alert to new opportunities, other possibilities, interesting alternatives. The common thread running through this magazine is what we have achieved with regard to sustainability so far. To be continued!

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SUSTAINABILITY

AT SENTINEL UNDER SCRUTINY

The term 'sustainability' is actually the sum of many different aspects. It is related to our use of natural resources, such as water and energy, but also refers to people and working conditions, as well as raw materials and packaging. We put sustainability at Sentinel under scrutiny according to a number of key topics.



Water: towards a closed circuit

These days, not a single summer passes without the scarcity of water being mentioned. Water is too precious a resource to waste. This is particularly the case if – like at Sentinel – it also contains valuable plant nutrients. The big advantage to our ebb and flood floors is that this allows water to be easily reused. Every drop not taken up by a plant is collected by this system.

To make the water suitable for reuse, we make use of an age-old yet still highly effective filtration technology: sand filtration, in combination with a precision filter. Sand filtration ensures that any bacteria left in drain water are killed. Thanks to this method, we have created a 100% closed system at Sentinel.

Energy: using what our 'neighbours' don't need

Which greenhouse horticulture business can permit itself to not keep vigilant eye on its energy consumption? Well, we at Sentinel have it easy. Gas has not been used to grow our Scindapsus plants for the past fifteen years. Instead, we have been using residual heat from the Amer Power Plant. Of course, this 'residual heat' does not come for free. The price we pay for it is linked to the current gas prices, but it still makes a positive difference to the bottom line. But does this mean that our plants are grown without any gas at all? Not quite. We do have a gas-powered boiler to provide our crop with CO₂. This runs at a very low RPM and is adapted entirely to the production of carbon dioxide. Also, any excess heat produced in summer is retained thanks to an efficient buffering system.



LED lighting: cost savings of 75%

We were among the first growers to start using LED lighting in our greenhouses. Seven years ago, we commissioned a study into the optimum light frequency for the cultivation of Scindapsus. Back then, LED lighting required a substantial investment – and it still does today. We use only 25% of the electricity we used when we had 400-Watt Son-T lamps. LED is actually a crucial necessity for our crop. By keeping the light levels artificially high in winter, the quality of our plants remains uniform, particularly in relation to the colour of their leaves and the compactness of their growth habit. However, you do need electricity for lighting. In our case, we use green energy for this, thanks to the 600 solar panels we have installed on our roof. In summer, we generate up to 30% of our total energy requirements completely independently.

Potting soil: growing your plants in someone else's 'waste'

What is waste to one person can be an important raw material to another. That's the idea behind recycling in a nutshell. At Sentinel, we have been bringing this into practice for years. When coconuts are harvested in Sri Lanka, their shells are thrown away. They were considered nothing more than waste for decades – until their usefulness as a substrate was discovered.

Coconut shells (also called husks) are ground to a coarse powder and rinsed to create a product



called coir, which has superb qualities when used as a substrate for the cultivation of plants. Scindapsus plants simply thrive in this highly stable substrate. With a Dutch supplier who manages the entire chain, we are assured of the best quality coir all year round.

Crop protection: hardly needed

Looking at it from an environmental viewpoint, Scindapsus is also an excellent crop for a plant nursery. There are few greenhouse crops that need as few resources as this plant. The first reason for this is that the quality of the cuttings we get from Uganda is simply outstanding. This means that every crop is given a 'clean' start at our nursery.



The second reason is that the plants are grown for only a short time in Sprang-Capelle. Pests and diseases therefore never get enough time to become a serious problem. Any spider or other mites that do manage to infest the greenhouse in summer are eradicated in no time at all. It's also good to know that Sentinel is MPS-certified. That applies to both our nursery in Sprang-Capelle and the one in Uganda.

Waste: separation at the source

All the waste generated at the nursery in Sprang-Capelle is collected in separate containers and disposed of separately. There are special flows for green waste, paper, plastic, and miscellaneous waste. One of the biggest advantages to separation at the source is that it makes recycling easier. Speaking of paper: you will find more information about our packaging on pages 16 and 17. We are so proud of our new line for paper and cardboard!



CONNIE KLAVER

'A PLANT AS STRONG AS THE SCINDAPSUS IS A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE'



The Scindapsus is a genuine favourite among stylists. 'Not only is the plant incredibly strong; it lends itself beautifully to floral arrangements,' says Connie Klaver. Connie had her own florist's shop until 2017, but she now works as a freelance floral designer. You will regularly find her company CK Bloemen at events and trade fairs.

Does she ever use Scindapsus?

'Of course! The Scindapsus has always been one of my favourites. This is also because it is one of the strongest houseplants. Just like many other plants and flowers from the past, the Scindapsus has been rediscovered by trendsetters. The Scindapsus has become really fashionable again as a hanging plant.'



Is there a reason for this revival?

'The many new varieties in terms of foliage may certainly account for this. There are also varieties that thrive in a dark corner. This means that the Scindapsus is suitable for every type of interior.'

How do you use Scindapsus in a floral arrangement?

'I usually use them in hanging arrangements, in big baskets. Scindapsus vines are really great to work with. If you cut them off and put them in water, you will have some lovely material for decorations in no time at all.'

Is sustainability a factor you take into consideration when selecting a plant or flower?

'I think sustainability is something that cannot be ignored. Sustainability goes a lot further than merely avoiding the use of chemical pesticides. We tend to throw out plants that are no longer in perfect condition far too quickly. A plant as strong as the Scindapsus is always a sustainable choice. It's also very easy to take cuttings from. But I'm not sure if that's something a nursery wants to hear, ha-ha!'



GREEN LIGHT FOR GLOBAL GREEN

Every Scindapsus has shades of green in it, but no variety is as green as Global Green. This variety has provided the Colors of Sentinel range with added value. 'Added value is always a priority when Sentinel introduces a new variety,' says Ad Dekkers.

He shows us an example of the Global Green variety. 'Look how subtle the patterns on the leaf are. That makes it a real eye-catcher. It's also a variety that appeals to growers. Global Green is a lovely plant with a compact growth habit – exactly what you want in a Scindapsus.'

The variety has been grown in the Sentinel greenhouses for a year now. Its popularity is still growing. Sentinel is the only grower to produce this variety: the nursery owns the exclusive rights to Global Green.

Responding to fashionable colours

What criteria does Sentinel apply in the selection of new varieties? 'Distinctiveness,' is Ad's decisive answer. 'That can be distinctiveness in terms of colour, leaf shape, or growth habit.' A potted plant such as the Scindapsus can also owe its popularity to the extent to which its colour is in fashion. 'This



is why we keep a close eye on colour trends. We try to respond to this. Pothos is a variety that has been part of our product range for years. This year, the sale of Pothos has tripled just because its yellowish-green colour is completely on-trend at the moment!'

Tip! -----
Global Green goes perfectly with our other varieties: Brasil, Golden Pothos, Happy Leaf, Marble Queen, Pictus, Scandens, Trebie, and Aureum. Check them all out on www.sentinel.nl





HOMEBASE

THE FIVE MOST COMMON PLANT-CARE MISTAKES CONSUMERS MAKE AT HOME

The Scindapsus is a plant that does not demand a lot from its carer. Still, we would like to offer a few care tips to help you enjoy your plant even longer. What are the five most common plant-care mistakes made by Scindapsus owners?

1. Keeping the soil too dry

If the Scindapsus places any demands on us at all, they concern watering. If the soil dries out completely, the plant will no longer be able to take up any water. The solution in this case is transplanting the Scindapsus to a new pot containing fresh potting soil. This will also give the plant access to nutrients such as vitamins and minerals.

2. Giving it too much water in one go

It's true that a Scindapsus' roots like moist soil, but they don't like to be waterlogged. The best way to water a Scindapsus is to immerse the entire pot in water for 10 minutes. This will allow the roots to acclimatize.

DON'T PLACE YOUR SCINDAPSUS IN DIRECT SUNLIGHT, BUT MAKE SURE IT GETS PLENTY OF LIGHT

3. Failing to remove brown or yellow leaves

Leaves can occasionally turn brown or yellow. Advise your customers to snip them off immediately. This will allow the plant to direct its energy towards the leaves that are still beautifully green.

4. Waiting too long before repotting

The Scindapsus has such an exuberant growth habit that consumers are often late in noticing that it has outgrown its pot. The plant should be repotted once every two years. Not only will it get more space; the fresh potting soil will give its enthusiastic growth habit a new impulse!

5. The wrong spot

The Scindapsus is able to survive in the jungles of South-east Asia, where the sun hardly ever reaches its leaves. It does, however, need light! This is why you should not place your Scindapsus in direct sunlight, but you still need to make sure it gets plenty of light. Keep it at a temperature between 18 and 25°C (64 - 77°F) and avoid drafts.



GOODBYE PLASTIC HELLO PAPER!

Plastic was the standard for packaging in the floriculture industry for many, many years. Why wrap plants and flowers in environmentally harmful plastic if paper is just as good? This is a simple question – with a difficult answer. Finding the right paper sleeve required a huge amount of experimentation. The useful properties offered by plastic – such as protective and water-resistant – can't simply be transferred to paper.

Putting a plant in a paper sleeve also requires more work. It takes approximately 20% more time. However, this was no reason for Sentinel to give up on this environmentally friendly alternative. Not only are our sleeves made from paper now; our trays are also plastic-free. They are made from cardboard. Another advantage is that the presentation of our plants in their paper sleeves (made from FSC paper) was given a real boost, with materials in the familiar Colors of Sentinel house style. Our switch to paper and cardboard means that we are no longer using 30,000 kilos of plastic every year.



SENTINEL

IN SUSTAINABLE NUMBERS

600 THERE ARE 600 SOLAR PANELS INSTALLED ON THE SENTINEL PREMISES. IN SUMMER, THIS PROVIDES US WITH UP TO 30 PER CENT OF THE ENERGY WE NEED.



10 THE ENERGY WE USE TO HEAT OUR CROPS IS DERIVED FROM A SOURCE LOCATED ONLY 10 KM AWAY: THE AMER POWER PLANT. TO THEM, IT IS RESIDUAL HEAT. TO US, IT IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE!



19.000 WE CAN'T KEEP TRACK OF THIS EXACTLY, BUT THIS IS PROBABLY THE NUMBER OF CUPS OF COFFEE CONSUMED AT THE CANTEEN IN SPRANG-CAPELLE EVERY YEAR. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THIS IS SUSTAINABLE COFFEE.



8 WE HAVE BEEN GETTING MORE AND MORE ORDERS EVER SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW PACKAGING LINE FOR PAPER AND CARDBOARD. THESE ORDERS WERE PLACED BY EIGHT CUSTOMERS WHO ARE JUST AS KEEN TO EMBRACE SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING AS WE ARE.

TREATING PEOPLE WELL: NOTHING EXCEPTIONAL, JUST SELF-EVIDENT

Sustainability or corporate social responsibility is also something to take into consideration in your HR policy. This is certainly the case at Sentinel. Treating your employees well should never be considered a luxury; it should be no more than self-evident – whether this concerns our employees in Sprang-Capelle or the people working at our propagation nursery in Uganda.

Getting enough personnel is difficult these days. This applies particularly to people with green thumbs and who are keen workers. This is why Sentinel invests in good working conditions. Working in a greenhouse can hardly be compared to working at an office. This is why we try to make our workers' tasks less strenuous wherever we can. Our employment conditions,

however, come out on top in every comparison.

The wages earned by our workers – above the CLA standard – are a good example of this.

What about temporary workers?

We are proud of our team of permanent employees, who have been working at Sentinel for many years,



WE ARE
PROUD OF
THE TEAM
WE HAVE!



but we also employ temporary workers. They are hired through a temp agency that we have collaborated with for many years to great satisfaction. This is an intermediary that treats workers from other countries well, and takes responsibility with regard to housing – an item that has been in the news quite a lot recently.

Doing our bit for a better world

We also take pride of the small contribution we are making towards a better world. The nursery where our cuttings are produced is located in Uganda, precisely on the equinox. The fact that we have a branch here allows us to kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. We can help raise the standard of living in Uganda and grow cuttings of an outstanding quality all year round.

Free meals and medical care

Our cuttings enterprise in Africa is a joint venture set up with another Dutch company. The management is Dutch. We are not the only Dutch company that has established a business in Uganda. Other suppliers of potted plants also have their cuttings grown here. As a result, we have clout here and are able to contribute to the welfare of the local population.

Our 60 -100 employees can be assured of getting free meals, and they and their families have access to free medical treatment and dental care. The employment offered by Sentinel and the other companies operating here is worth its weight in gold to a local community like this.



FROM SENSITIVE FEET TO GREEN THUMBS: **ANTOINETTE – OUR MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT**

Antoinette Teuling has been working for Sentinel for almost a year now. 'I was supposed to become Ad's right as well as left-hand person,' she says with a twinkle in her eye. 'My official job title is Management Assistant.' In practice, this means that she, 'Takes care of all aspects of our HR policy, from scheduling and assessment interviews to solving problems. Social media management is another one of my tasks. It wasn't as if Ad threw me into the deep end, though. He sometimes calls me a little impatient. I want to know everything straight away. When that happens, Ad tells me to take it easy!'

It was quite a career switch. Antoinette's last job bore no relation to having green fingers, but to painful feet. 'I used to work for a firm that made orthopaedic shoes.' Here, I also acted as the management assistant to the director. Sentinel may be a completely different company, but my package of tasks is pretty much the same.'

The concept of having green fingers is hardly foreign to Antoinette.

Enthusiastically, she continues, 'Yes, of course I have

lots of plants at home! You need to know what you're selling, after all!' Her favourite Scindapsus? 'Brasil! I love its colours, and that vivid stripe running through the leaves!' Apart from the 28 hours a week she spends at Sentinel, she also has a home life. Antoinette is married and has three children – and Beau, the Maltese dog that regularly accompanies her on her walks. 'I enjoy walking very much! And sport, too!'



WE ARE CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A TRIAL TO SEE IF NIGHTTIME TEMPERATURES CAN BE LOWERED TO 18 OR PERHAPS EVEN 17 DEGREES CELSIUS.



'WE WILL JUST KEEP ON GOING'

Go ahead! Dare to ask a business owner about his future ambitions in times as uncertain as these – his plans for the future, and his dreams. Many business owners these days are just trying to keep their heads above water. Ad Dekkers, the face of Sentinel, however, has a 'moderately positive' outlook for the future.

There is a lot going on in the world today. These developments all have their repercussions for the horticulture industry. Ad is not a business owner who easily gets despondent. 'It is only too obvious that gas is very important for a business like ours. The future

in respect of our energy supply remains very uncertain. I can't really make any predictions. We are financially healthy and have a buffer. All we can do is just keep going.' Fortunately, Sentinel is currently a state-of-the-art company thanks to the considerable investments made over the past few years.

Lower nighttime temperatures

Despite its access to residual heat, Sentinel is aware that further energy-saving measures are necessary. To reduce the nursery's gas consumption, Ad is experimenting with lower daytime and nighttime

temperatures. 'Normally, we keep the greenhouses at a temperature of 20 degrees Celsius at night. We are currently conducting a trial to see if nighttime temperatures can be lowered to 18 or perhaps even 17°C (64.4 or 62.2°F). Whether this drop in temperature is feasible depends on more than the temperature tolerance of the plants. The economic aspect also needs to be taken into account. Lowering the temperature may also result in a crop being kept in the greenhouse for one week longer than is currently the case. This results in higher production costs.'

Moderately positive

Starting in autumn, the nursery will start potting its customary number of plants again. Ad says that it is

impossible to look further ahead than that. 'It depends strongly on how the government and parliament regard our sector. I have no idea what the future will bring. The sector is bound to be hit. We have a strong position on the market and are even market leaders with our plants in 12 and 15 cm pots. I have a moderately positive outlook.'





COLORS OF
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COLORS OF SENTINEL

From Brasil to Marble Queen. Colors of Sentinel represents a wide and varied Scindapsus product range. We can supply all varieties year-round. Tell us how you want to receive your order and we'll customize the delivery. With or without a price sticker, in a special pot or cover? Nothing's too much for us.

You can find more information about Colors of Sentinel on our website, www.sentinel.nl. Follow Colors of Sentinel on social media (Instagram and Facebook) for all the latest news and green inspiration. If you work with plants, we'd love you to share your photos with us at [#colorsofsentinel](https://www.instagram.com/colorsofsentinel). Looking forward to seeing them!

