

EurepGap and Plant Propagation Material Requirements®

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Started as an initiative by retailers in 1997, the current version of the EurepGap Fruit and Vegetables document and procedures has been agreed among partners from the entire food chain. Interest from leading European Flower producers and buying retailers has led to establishing a technical working group, which has established itself as Technical and Standards Committee for Flowers and Ornamentals. In this capacity, the group developed and tested the new normative documents for the EurepGap flower protocol. All the implementation experience from the Fruit and Vegetable standard could be utilized.

Eurep has announced the group's activities at the Bologna Conference in Oct. 2001 and launched the latest version in Amsterdam in Sept. 2003. Large schemes have announced their intention to apply for benchmarking, i.e., for official recognition by EurepGap. Stichting Milieu Programma Sierteelt (MPS) was the first such scheme to benchmark against EurepGap and is now awaiting final results.

EurepGap has been a large dark cloud on the horizon for many ornamental growers who have been putting off the time to engage. Negative feelings and suspicions of extra cost and bureaucracy have to be removed. It is believed that a system of nationally relevant benchmarking and regionally tailored solutions are the only way for growers to achieve continuous improvement, acceptable standards, and self-sustainability.

EurepGap is a means of incorporating integrated pest management (IPM) and integrated crop management (ICM) practices within the framework of commercial agricultural production. Adoption of IPM/ICM is regarded by EurepGap members as essential for the long-term improvement and sustainability of agricultural production.

The EurepGap Flower and Ornamentals Document sets out a framework for Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) on farms which defines essential elements for the development of best-practice for the global production of floricultural products (e.g., flowers and ornamentals). It defines the minimum standard acceptable to the leading retail groups in Europe, however, standards for some individual retailers and those adopted by some farmers may exceed those described. This document does not set out to provide prescriptive guidance on every method of agricultural production.

The document is divided into 15 different sections, with a total of 215 control points, divided into 140 required and 75 encouraged control points. The document covers traceability, record-keeping, varieties, and rootstocks, site history and management, soil and substrate management, fertilizer use, irrigation/fertigation, crop protection, harvesting, post-harvest treatments, waste and pollution management, worker health safety and welfare, environmental enhancement, complaint forms, and internal inspections. The third section, varieties and rootstocks, will be covered in this presentation.

Table 1. EurepGap Fruit and Vegetables document and procedures: varieties and rootstocks.**3. VARIETIES AND ROOTSTOCKS**

3.1 Choice of variety or rootstock

No.	Control Point	Compliance Criteria	Level
3.1.1	Is the grower aware of the importance of effective crop husbandry in relation to 'mother crops' (i.e., the seed-producing crop)?	Cultivation techniques and measurements should be adopted which can minimize inputs such as crop protection products and fertilisers in subsequent crops.	Encouraged
3.1.2	Is the grower aware of the customer quality specifications if there are any and does he/she comply with them?	Written correspondence exists between customer and grower demonstrating mutual agreement on quality specifications at any one time. The grower must prove that the agreed quality specifications are adhered to. No N/A.	Required
3.1.3	Have varieties or rootstocks been agreed with principal customers?	There is a written agreement between customer and grower, and the variety conforms to the customer's quality specification.	Encouraged
3.1.4	Where varieties or rootstocks are agreed with clients, is there a written specification defining the varieties to be grown?	There is a written agreement between customer and grower, and the variety conforms to the customer's quality specification.	Encouraged
3.1.5	Do the crops grown match the written specifications?	Documented records, e.g., plant passport must be available, and must match the customers' specifications.	Encouraged
3.1.6	Does the variety or rootstock meet the UPOV (International Union for the protection of new varieties of plants) guidelines?	There are written documents available on request that prove that the varieties grown have been obtained in accordance to local legislation and in compliance with intellectual property rights. No N/A	Required

REFERENCES:

Global Partnership for Safe and Sustainable Agriculture. <www.eurep.org>.