

Tobacco Research Board

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Please address all
correspondence to
the General Manager

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Dear Grower

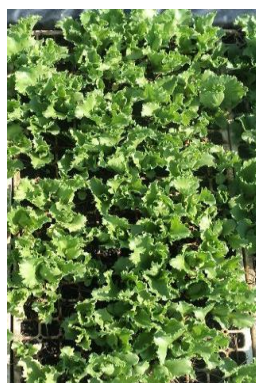
RE: PRODUCTION OF VEGETABLE AND FLOWER SEEDLINGS USING THE FLOAT SYSTEM

The float system is an efficient and effective method for producing tobacco seedlings. It requires less space and reduced fertilisers and water than the conventional soil-based system for producing seedlings. The float system also produces uniform seedlings with a robust root system compared to seedlings from other production systems. Composted pine bark has successfully been used as a soilless medium in the tobacco float seedling production system in Zimbabwe and in many other countries.

Vegetables such as tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*), Onion (*Allium cepa*), Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*), cabbage (*Brassica oleraceae*), flowers such as Chrysanthemum (*Dendranthema grandiflora*) and gum trees (*Eucalyptus spp*) can be successfully raised using the float system. These vegetable, flower and gum seedlings are raised using the hydroponic fertiliser, Kutsaga Floatfert®, at rates recommended for raising tobacco seedlings (150 mg N/ha), but some types of seedlings require more fertiliser. The recommended nutritional information by seedling type is presented in the table below. Seedlings should be ready for transplanting into the field in 4-5 weeks after sowing.

| Species | Fertiliser requirements per 72 trays | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| | Basal 1 - floatfert | Basal 2 - floatfert | Basal 3 - floatfert | Ammonium nitrate |
| Tomato | 1 L @ sowing | 2 L @ 7 days | 3 L @ 14 days | Nil |
| Cabbage | 1 L @ sowing | 2 L @ 7 days | 3 L @ 14 days | Nil |
| Onion | 1 L @ sowing | 2 L @ 7 days | 3 L @ 14 days | Nil |
| Lettuce | 2 L @ sowing | 2 L @ 7 days | Nil | Nil |
| Chrysanthemum | 1 L @ 7 days | 2 L @ 14 days | 3 L @ 21 days | Nil |
| Eucalyptus | 1 L @ 7 days | 2 L @ 21 days | 3 L @ 35 days | 500g @ 42 days |

Below are photographic images showing lettuce, chrysanthemum and gum seedlings raised using the float system.



Lettuce

Chrysanthemum

Eucalyptus

The float seedling production system will substantially lower overall seedling production costs while ensuring robust, uniform transplants which facilitate easier crop management in the field, and attendant yield and quality improvement.

For more information, contact Kutsaga Research Station's Crop productivity Services Division on telephone # (04) 575 289-94 or toll-free, 0800 4511 or Email: tobres@kutsaga.co.zw or visit Kutsaga Research Station.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by 'Rukuni'.

Dr D. Rukuni

HEAD OF CROP PRODUCTIVITY SERVICES