

# Rijk Zwaan

## Pepper News

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### Crop manual Baselga RZ Yellow blocky pepper



Newsletter 4 March 2009

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**A**t this time a lot of growers find they have a high fruit load on their plants. This is partly because Baselga RZ sets early and easily. Here are some things to keep in mind as you consider the balance between fruit load and plant growth:

Baselga RZ in general does not need a lot of help with growth, but keep an eye on how high the flowers are getting in the head. And keep measuring your weekly growth. If you've gone from 10 cm a week down to less than 4 cm, it's time to make some adjustments. Some growers are considering a night irrigation to help with the growth. Careful that you don't do this too long and build a watery weak kind of plant. It can help to give night irrigations for a time – and you should see the results fast. So maybe after 2 to 5 nights of this, you can remove them again.

If you've been using a high CO<sub>2</sub> level to encourage a generative steering, you might want to consider lowering it – but only go really low if the growth has slowed considerably. A boost of CO<sub>2</sub> on the sunny days is good to ensure that the fruits will size up and that the plants get the benefit of this “fertilizer”. So in general when steering for growth, stay away from the really high boost levels, but keep the levels above ambient.

EC levels in general are coming down in the growing media. The fruits are starting to size now, so it's good that they're coming down. This will help maintain the growth in the plant and allow the fruits to get the water easily. A minimum level of 3.0 EC in the drip will allow for adequate fertilizer and make sure that we're still making good quality flowers/ buds.

You might have to consider lowering the 24 hour average temperature. We talk about keeping the speed high to help make good flowers, but slowing down might be necessary with higher fruit loads. Slowing down to about 19.5 C average is ok when necessary (according to your light levels and fruit load). Always look to the head of the plant. When you can keep the speed with higher averages, do it!

Careful with bright days after a cloudy period. Guard against root loss by keeping the pre morning and morning periods active – especially during the dark days. Stop the irrigation early enough in the afternoon. Baselga RZ is a big plant which adds a lot of moisture to the air, so keep this in mind as you manage things like your pipe temperatures, screen openings and venting set points.

For the later planting dates: If you're not sure about the fruit shape of the recent set fruits, plan to leave more fruits per stem than you need. Then wait a bit longer before pruning. This will allow you to quality prune at the same time as you prune for the proper fruit load. Mark some of the newly set fruits and come back later to check on their quality/shape. You'll then get a better feel for what will develop into good shaped fruits. This will help to avoid unnecessarily pruning away too many fruits.

In general we see that paying attention to the quality of the early flowers has paid off with good fruit shape. Now we can move ahead without giving this as much attention. The plant is much more in balance after the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of fruit and will make good quality flowers naturally.

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## More information

For more information you can contact our local advisor for greenhouse crops John DeVries by phone (519 324 6669) or e-mail ([j.devries@rijkwaaan.com](mailto:j.devries@rijkwaaan.com)). Please also visit [www.rijkwaaanusa.com](http://www.rijkwaaanusa.com)

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