"Coffee Break" ANOVApot® Grower Survey Queensland, 2007

Introduction

The ANOVApot® was first available in February 2005, with PIR licenced to commercially produce in September 2005. By December, PIR were manufacturing three ANOVApot® sizes (140mm, 175mm and a 200mm). PIR ceased operation in May 2006. In purchasing the plant and stock of PIR , GCP acquired the three Anovapot dies, some 200,000 140mm ANOVApot® and 30,000 200mm ANOVApot® GCP has been selling and manufacturing ANOVApot® since June 2006. Some 3.5 million ANOVApot® have been sold and tested by more than 50 nurseries throughout Australia. At least 10 nurseries have fully converted to the pot.

While still a new product in GCP's extensive catalogue range of nursery products, the ANOVApot® has now been in the market place long enough (two years) for a timely review of its performance. An assessment of the level of market acceptance of the ANOVApot® should aid management in deciding how to proceed in further specific market support for this product.

The ANOVApot® is unique and protected by patent. As licensee, GCP is promoting the ANOVApot® to the nursery industry as well as supporting all the claims initially proposed by Anova Solutions Pty Ltd, the present owner of the patent. These claims, if fully substantiated, should place the ANOVApot® well ahead of any other commercially available pot of similar size and cost. As such it should have a competitive edge in the market place with a range of commercially valuable attributes not found in any other pot.

Assessment Survey

While a new salesperson to join the GCP marketing team, I (Gordon Graham) have been previously involved with the Anovapot when it was being marketed by PIR. Consequently, in contrast to other GCP sales people, I have always been positive about this new pot. I am thus well placed to continue to promote the ANOVApot® free of any market sceptism in my support for the pot..

I carried out a market assessment by way of a nursery grower survey, with questions reflecting the many claims that have been made by Anova Solutions Pty Ltd on behalf of the Anovapot. Feedback was sought on the physical attributes of the pot and what sort of further work growers would like to see carried out on it.

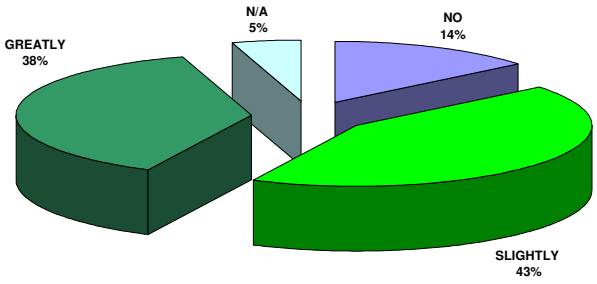
The Survey was designed to be very simple and able to be completed within the time of a "tea break". As an inducement and in the theme of the survey (The Anovapot Coffee Break Survey) I included a mug and some biscuits with the survey pack. I asked recipients to return completed surveys by the 18th of February, with follow up phone calls to a few non-respondents. More than 50 forms went out while 21 useful replies were received.

ANOVApot Survey Highlights…

Saves water?

81% Agree

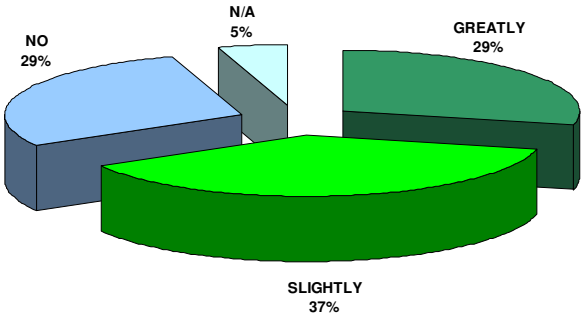
Water takes longer to drain from the **ANOVApot®** than from most other pots. This is particularly evident if the potting mix is allowed to dry out and shrink from the side wall. The longer the water stays in the pot the more thoroughly the potting mix is wetted and less water is lost. While drainage is slower it is still adequately completed within 15-30 minutes of application.



Faster growth?

66% Agree

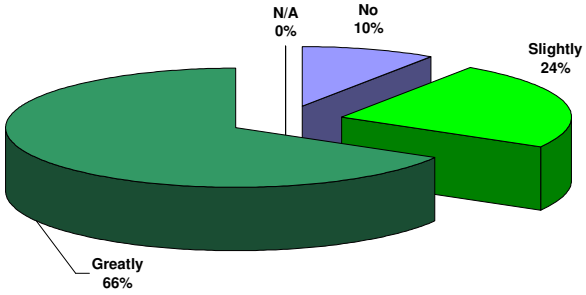
The better growth in **Anovapot®** is probably due to its greater water retention. Thus, the better plant performance in the ANOVApot® is most likely in open mixes with low water holding capacity that are watered infrequently.



Reduces root escape?

90% Agree

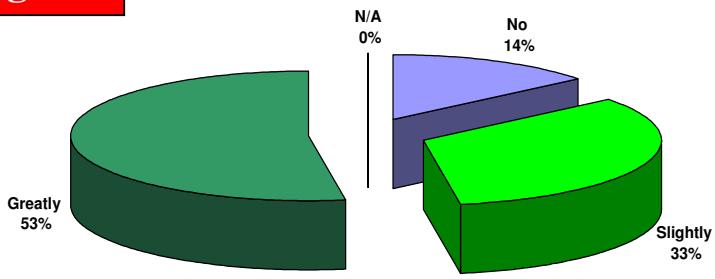
Roots that escape need to be removed in preparing the pot for sale. This takes time and effort. These roots can attach themselves to material under the pot with the plant becoming dependent on them for an additional supply of water and nutrients. Cutting off these roots can severely shock the plant, while the roots left behind in the mat (or other material) provide sites for infection by disease organisms. Removal of pots and breaking roots disturbs the matting and the levels of the underlying material.



Saves time ($) in pot cleaning?

86% Agree

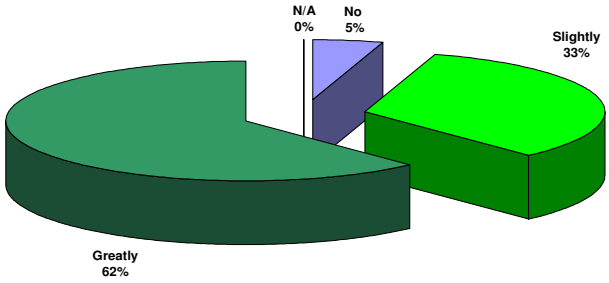
Often when marketing to the retail trade, roots that emerge through the bottom holes of pots have to be removed. The time spent will vary with species, how the plant was grown, how old the plant is and the 'toughness' of the roots. Roots that do escape through the central hole of the **ANOVApot®** are often the thinner, softer, feeder root type that can be easily removed by hand. The flat bottom surface of the **ANOVApot®** allows fast and efficient root removal.



Easier to extract plants?

95% Agree

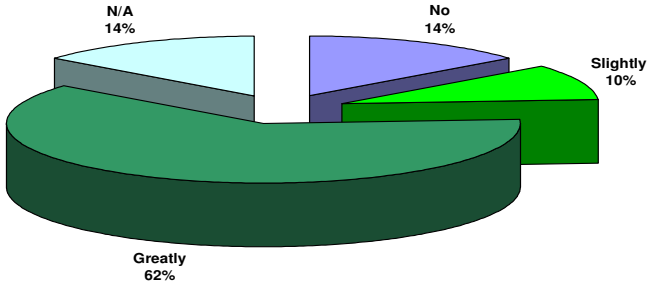
The longer a plant stays in a pot the more difficult it is to remove. Much of this resistance to removal is related to root escape which is minimized in the **ANOVApot®.** Landscapers prefer pots without escaped roots because plants are easier to extract. With potting on, the healthy root ball from an ANOVApot® is more likely to stay intact than from a pot where roots have escaped.



No salt encrustation?

72% Agree

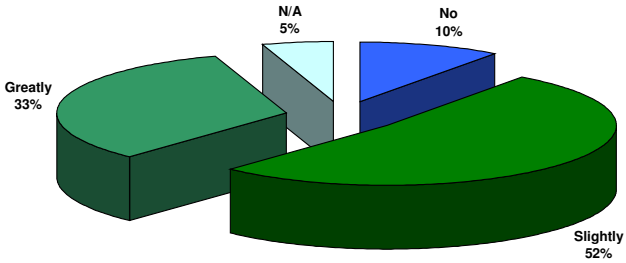
Salt encrustation is unsightly and should be removed in preparing the pot for retail sale. It often occurs under drip irrigation when the drainage water that emerges through the side holes evaporates, leaving behind a layer of calcium salt. This layer enlarges over time with every evaporative cycle. Salt encrustation is not likely to form under overhead irrigation.



No drainage problems?

86% Agree

Water ponds if the potting mix is very dry. As it wets up, capillary forces drive the water to all parts of the pot including the outlet grid area. This capillary flow to the grid area sets up automatically and removes all free water from the bottom of the pot. If the **Anovapot®** is in contact with an underlying mat that drains well drainage may exceed that of a side hole pot in which a perched layer occurs. Drainage occurs in all sorts of potting mixes with good capillary flow features, including sand based mixes. It is not recommended to place the **Anovapot®** in direct contact with black plastic film because of the possibility of sealing. A video demonstration of drainage may be viewed on anovapot.com



Healthier growth?

71% Agree

Bearing in mind the positive **ANOVApot®** effect on plant water relations as well as its effect in reducing root damage, it is likely that the **ANOVApot®** will also produce healthier plants. Air pruned roots at the base of an holed pot may provide sites for pathogen entry. Such air pruning does not occur in the **ANOVApot®**