

SYNERGY

THE TERRACOTTEM ADVANTAGE

13

TICKING BOXES

10 YEARS ON

We love revisiting our project sites to see how they're progressing (yes - it's hard to let go). And since people move around a fair bit these days, it's not often you can catch up with those you worked with, to get their take on things. So here's a rare moment - a recent chat with Leichhardt Council's Manager of Parks and Streetscapes, Vince Cusumano. Ten years ago he raved about one of our jobs, and he's still happy with the results...



Vince Cusumano, left, with Tim Brown, Leichhardt's Playing Field Team leader.



10 years ago, this was the before and after.

Back then, Vince hadn't yet used TerraCottem, but luckily for us he's the type of person who likes to give things a go. He also explained that he's quick to pull the plug when things don't live up to the promises. As he said back then, "I'd give it the boot, and give the people who gave the spin a fan spray."

Both King George and Easton Park fields were treated during a reconstruction - what was left of the old turf was poisoned, the surface ripped to shreds, TerraCottem rotary hoed in and all the levelling, irrigation and returfing done.

And the brilliant results in the short term were based around the fact that the treated fields didn't need serious rejuvenation at the end of the season. As Vince said back then, "The turf growing on these fields is very quick to establish - we've only needed to re-turf the middle third which means that we've saved on two-thirds of the area."

What's wonderful, but a little bit spooky, is that's almost exactly what Vince says ten years on, long past when anyone thought TerraCottem would be offering significant benefits. "We know now to wait a few weeks at the end of the season for the tinge of green to appear. We do have to returf the goal mouths and the field centre, but that's a quarter of the field and not the two-thirds you'd expect."

"Of course TerraCottem is not the be all, end all, you can't just put it in and walk away. You need to keep up with the usual green-keeping cultural practices, but it is a great tool. Obviously less water is needed if we're working to establish smaller newly turfed areas, and because the TerraCottem holds the water in the strike zone for longer, it supports the fertilisers in the same way." And the weeds? "The stronger the sward the fewer the weeds."



THE TC ADVANTAGE

TC Advantage is a package deal. It's about supplying TerraCottem along with all the training, technical specification and compliance needed to turn a tricky project into a genuine long-term success. So when anyone has a turf, street tree or revegetation project to tackle, bringing in the TC Advantage expertise means you get training so that it's applied for maximum benefit; and monitoring to ensure compliance within the project's specs. As for TerraCottem, it's a brilliant soil-conditioning treatment because it works on several fronts at the same time...

To start with, it uses two main mechanisms to encourage substantial root development – copolymers and root growth precursors.

The copolymers are a little like water-holding crystals except that TerraCottem's hydroabsorbent copolymers have been carefully selected and well researched. This means that instead of just one polymer with a narrow water-holding and water-releasing ability, there is a group of them providing the same function over a wide range, for years. To put it crudely, more water can be stored and released under a broader variety of conditions.

As for the root growth precursors, by definition a precursor is a chemical compound which leads to another. The precursors found in TerraCottem do exactly this, and for a very good reason. If you put growth hormones into soil, they rapidly biodegrade. But if you put precursors into the root zone, the plants get a kick-start by synthesising their own growth hormones. And this conducive environment – for optimum cell division and elongation – stays like this for 12 months.

Then there is a nicely varied collection of plant nutrients – soluble mineral fertilisers, in a format suited to the early growth phase of a plant; slow-release fertilisers, designed to offer a constant source of food over many months; and synthesised organic fertilisers which focus on the soil, stimulating micro-biological activity and general soil health.

Add this all together and the result is fast and furious root establishment. This means greater accessibility to water, fewer losses, and, given the reciprocal dynamic between roots and canopy, noticeably vigorous growth. In the longer term, the soil-conditioning power of TerraCottem means that plantings are buffered from stress. It's great stuff.



TERRACOTTEM®