

Sheridan Nurseries' unique...

'Bio-pond'



Story and photos by Ted Brown

Water— it's the life blood of every living organism in the world today, and has become more and more important as civilization has come to realize that it's becoming scarce.

Responsible stewardship has not only become vogue, but also imperative as we see the world's supply of clean, fresh water being depleted.

Sheridan Nurseries in Glen Williams is a local business that depends on lots of water to grow their plants and maintain their operation.

For years, the local company has used the nearby Credit River as a summer water source, pumping water to various areas on the company's land to irrigate the plants set out in the fields.

Addressing the need to conserve, and becoming more environmentally responsible, Sheridan has built a new four-acre irrigation pond which uses and re-uses the water as it is sprayed on the plants.

The water that runs off the fields after irrigation is collected in a man-made marshy area, where it is naturally filtered through the various marsh plants.

From there it is pumped back into the irrigation

pond, ready to be once again pumped through the system and back on the fields.

"More than three years ago, we decided we needed to conserve our water, and the most logical means of doing that was to retrieve our (runoff) irrigation water," said Sheridan's irrigation supervisor Steve Deschenes.

"We had been pulling water from the Credit (River) and had an annual permit to draw water from the Credit," said Valerie Stensson, Sheridan's vice-president of marketing and purchasing, "but we wanted to reduce that, and lessen any impact we had on the Credit.

"With the varying weather we've had over the past few years, we never know what (water) we're going to need to maintain the plants, and it was important that we come up with an alternative plan, before we were in a situation where our permit wasn't renewed, or was reduced.

"So the investigation began to look for alternative water sources, and perhaps alternative ways to gather and filter the water," said Stensson.

"That's where the idea of a 'bio pond' came from."

'In essence we created a natural wetland area, which takes a lot of the nitrates out of the water.'



Top: Valerie Stensson, vice-president, marketing & purchasing for Sheridan Nurseries and irrigation supervisor Steve Deschenes check out the irrigation pond system.

Above: Bart Brusse shows how the cocoa mats fit into the pots to limit weed growth and evaporation using the water-saving Pot'n Pot system.

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