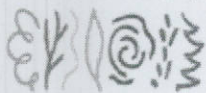


FLOWERS
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BELGIUM

Interview Marc De Raeve

14.06.2016

50 ha open ground in Wetteren, the centre of the Flemish arboriculture sector. That's the terrain on which Marc De Raeve improves and grows trees. Customers from around Europe buy direct from the company and are guaranteed a personal service from this thoroughly family business.



Marc De Raeve: 'Our family approach ensures that we control everything ourselves. As a consequence we have chosen to trade directly with our customers. It means we can be completely on the ball and succeed in thinking up solutions to the specific needs of our customers. Despite the fact that we are a family business, we can supply quite large volumes.'

Three generations

'At the beginning of the 20th century, my grandfather Polydoor De Raeve worked as a foreman for a major garden firm in the Brussels area. In 1920 he returned to his parental home in Wetteren and started up his own production company. His son Marcel eagerly developed the business further and since 1992 I have followed in his footsteps', says Marc enthusiastically. 'And the nice thing is, the family tradition is also reflected in our customer database. We have clients who have been buying their tree products from us for three generations', says Marc proudly.

Wide range

Marc De Raeve offers a wide range of tree products:

- **Avenue trees and ornamental trees:**
'We have been purchasing our rootstock from the same respected domestic and foreign growers for decades. We then improve them to create high-quality ornamental trees. Our end products are trees between 3 and 6 years of age.'
- **Fruit trees**
'We grow a wide range of apples (43 species of Malus), pears (15 species of Pyrus), plums (19 species of Prunus), cherries (14 varieties), peaches (10 species of Prunus persica), nectarines, apricots, medlars and quinces. We supply them as shrub, half-standard or standard, from 8/10 to 12/14. In addition, we also have standard chestnuts and walnuts, both from seed and improved.'
- **Conifers**
'We restrict our range to the most common hedge conifers, such as Taxus, Thuja, Cupressocyparis and Chamaecyparis. We have a great many of these in stock and supply them with balled roots.'
- **Ornamental shrubs**
'Our specialities in the ornamental shrub range are the evergreens, such as Photinia fraseri

'Red Robin', Prunus lusitanica, Prunus Caucasica, Prunus Rotundifolia and Ilex. We also offer many types of Hibiscus and Syringa. These shrubs are available in sizes ranging from 40/60 to 1.75/2m. The big sizes are always planted, so that we can guarantee regrowth.'

- **Standard roses:**

'Finally, standard roses represent a significant part of our business. Every year we bud ten thousand standard roses in various colours.'

Export

'Our client list includes other tree nurseries, garden centres and gardeners. About half of our production is earmarked for export, the rest stays on the domestic market', says Marc. 'Obviously our neighbours are the most important market for us. In France, for instance, they are mainly interested in our root ball products, fruit trees and ornamental trees. In Eastern Europe the demand is mostly for avenue and ornamental trees. Poland is currently our biggest market, but we are also active in Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Bulgaria, Switzerland and Italy', summarises Marc.

Marc De Raeve

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Looking to the future

'Our plans for the future? Investing in our business', replies Marc with conviction. 'We want to increase the profile of our company and explore new markets. With that in mind we are about to launch our new website, so we can present a better picture of our company. We would also like to take part in trade fairs more often. Because that's a perfect opportunity to make personal contacts and maintain them', stresses Marc. 'Last year we got to know the Swedish market at Elmia Garden, and from next year we will also have our own stand at IPM.'

