

## Installing tensiometers

### Introduction

Correct installation of tensiometers is vital to getting reliable readings. If the following steps are not taken you may have trouble with your tensiometer.

### Steps to installation

#### Day one

1. Never touch the tensiometer tip with your hand. Human oils can clog the pores which will affect the accuracy of your readings.
2. Fill the tensiometer with boiled water (cooled) or demineralised water. Do this by removing the red bung and pouring water down the tube. Once it is full replace the rubber bung. Demineralised water is used to ensure that the fine pores in the ceramic tip do not clog. Normal water has salts in it which will influence the speed at which the tensiometers react over time. If demineralised water is used maintenance will be reduced.
3. Once the tensiometer is full, sit it in a bucket of clean water OVERNIGHT. Ensure the tube is full and the tip is covered by water. By dropping a few drops of food dye in the water you inject into the tube, it can help you see the water level once the tensiometers are in the ground.
4. To prevent algae growth in the tip and tube (algae reduces the effectiveness of the tensiometer) you can use an algacide in the water. Algacide can be purchased from most irrigation supply stores.

#### Day two

1. Take the tensiometer out to the paddock in the bucket of water. The tip must stay wet until it is installed in the ground.
2. Make a 25 mm (1 inch) hole in the soil by ramming a steel rod into the ground or by using a wood auger to

remove the soil. If the ground is soft enough you may be able to push the tensiometers in without making an access hole.

3. It is important that there is good contact between the ceramic tip of the tensiometer and the soil. This will ensure that the readings are accurate and reliable.

4. Remove the tensiometer from the bucket and push it firmly into the hole (too much force will snap the tip off). Fill the hole with soil and pack it down around the tensiometer tube. Alternatively you can mix up a soil slurry and fill the hole, then push the tensiometer through the slurry. Leave 25 mm (1 inch) of the white plastic sleeve above the soil surface. This will ensure that they are located at the right depths.

For more details contact the Growcom members access line on 1800 654 222

Disclaimer: This information is provided as a reference tool only. Seek professional advice for irrigation specifics.



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