

Excursion 1 / Part 1

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Short portrait of the LVG Bad Zwischenahn

The Education & Research Station (LVG) in Bad Zwischenahn is an institution of the Chamber of Agriculture of Lower Saxony, a regional agricultural organization. Founded in 1942 in Aurich, East Frisia, the research station moved in 1976 to Bad Zwischenahn in the county 'Ammerland', approx. 60 km west of Bremen and 20 km west of Oldenburg, one of the most intensive and dynamic regions of nursery production in Europe. The climate is maritime with a mean annual temperature of 8.8 °C and precipitation of 700 – 800 mm per year. The LVG Bad Zwischenahn conducts applied research with woody ornamentals and ornamental pot plants. Its former arboretum nowadays is integrated into the 'Park of Gardens' (Park der Gärten, www.Park-der-Gaerten.de), where visitors find a worldwide unique assortment of rhododendrons, azaleas, conifers, heathers and other evergreen plants.

Applied research is carried out on more than 3 ha of open ground and 5.000 m² of greenhouse area. Main research cultures of hardy nursery stock are rhododendrons, evergreens, conifers and container plants.



At present research is focussed on peat free or highly peat reduced growing media, a topic which is of high political relevance. From 2016 until 2019 the LVG executed the project "TeiGa" (Torfersatzstoffe im Gartenbau, engl.: peat alternatives in horticulture). Follow-up projects are planned.

In our floriculture department research focuses on ericaceous plants (i.e. *Rhododendron simsii*) and assortments of new bedding plant varieties. Furthermore, the registration of cultivars of *Rhododendron simsii*, *Erica gracilis* and other species of *Erica* for breeder's rights are conducted on behalf of the Federal Office of Plant Varieties (Bundessortenamt).

Since 2004, the LVG Bad Zwischenahn is the Competence Center for hardy nursery stock and Azerca-cultures (*Azelia*, *Erica*, *Calluna*) in the context of the north German research network 'Cooperation Horticulture' (www.Norddeutsche-Kooperation.de)

Excursion 1 / Part 2



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Short portrait of the young plant nursery Lüske

In 1960 company founders Heinrich and Louise Lüske began producing lettuce and other vegetable young plants for neighboring customers and their own needs. Today 23 specialists (and about 45 seasonal workers) cultivate 350,000,000 young plants annually on an area of 13 ha.

Lüske is specialized in cultivating young vegetable plants for further cultivation in the field and greenhouse. Lettuce, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini and herbs are cultivated to order within a few weeks and then sold. The sale is mainly in professional horticulture but also the hobby market. Ordered plants are delivered to customers in air-conditioned trucks, just in time, 7 days a week. Lüske's sales region lies between Kassel, Berlin and Denmark.

Next to vegetables *Viola* (pansy) is another mainstay of the company. Depending on the requirement, market and season *Viola* seedlings are grown in 2, 4, 6 or 8 cm peat-based blocking media or multipot trays and marketed.



Greenhouse cultivation of 350,000,000 young plants annually (photo: Lüske GbR).

Many years of experience make Lüske a competent partner in agricultural vegetable production. Plants are cultivated in peat-based blocking media and multipot trays. Computer-controlled cultivation is a matter of course. Only rainwater is used for irrigation.

Use of high-quality growing media certified according to 'Grünstempel' criteria (Grünstempel is a German certification system for the certification of organic peat-reduced growing media) and sophisticated sowing and greenhouse technology underline the high quality standards of the company. Peat is the main growing media constituent. Woodfibers and coconut coir serve as a partial peat replacement.