



Helping quality growth

A new horticultural aid has been launched to the UK market which is said to greatly increase plants' resistance to heat, cold and frost.

Natural Plant Antifreeze (NPA) is made from *Thiobacillus* subspecies, bacteria and over 50 minerals, distributors Cropaid explained. It is a concentrated liquid that is diluted with water and sprayed as a mist over the plant. An application lasts up to 15 days, depending on crop type.

An interim Adas report into the effect of NPA on damage to strawberry plants after frosting at -3C for 2.5 hours showed that there was a 60% reduction in basal leaf damage 24 hours after removing from the frosting cabinet, versus the control plants.

Leaf curl had been reduced to just 10% (as against 40% of plants affected), collapsed petiole was down to 20%, as against 40%, petal drop had been reduced by half, and collapsed peduncle and petal browning had been eliminated entirely.

Adas' Jeremy Wiltshire said of the trials: "It is concluded that application of Cropaid NPA has potential to decrease the risk of economic loss through frost damage, by decreasing damage to flowers and foliage when frost occurs."

Cropaid said that NPA's ability to protect the plant from cold and frost harm meant the extra benefits of lowering the cost of heating glasshouses, extending the harvesting season, increasing crop yield and improving quality.