

A visit to the plant company Ayer: a glance at Turkey's horticultural possibilities

By Koen Tierens, secretary of AVBS, Belgium

Eight AIPH members joined the 2012 spring congress from 26 until 30 april in the region of Antalya, Turkey. They had the opportunity to stop by a local horticultural company, Ayer. All needed info you will find on the bilingual and very informative website <http://www.ayer.com.tr>. The visit itself provided a short but convincing view on the horticultural possibilities of the region and country. Real entrepreneurship adapted to local requirements but also developing to meet international standards.

Ayer has two main activities. The first is growing young plants for regional vegetable producers. The second producing cutflowers, rose and anthurium, for somewhat a hundred regional small and medium sized flower shops as well as a few wholesalers further away in Istanbul. On top of this Ayer also roots imported plant material in cooperation with different companies. As specialists in ornamental horticulture, the AIPH members took somewhat shorter time to walk through the vegetable part of the company. Still we saw a clean and well organized business unit with lots of activity and uniform quality. Entering the cut flower unit a whole lot of technical and market orientated questions arose from our group.



From these it made clear that Ayer uses two types of greenhouses. The first somewhat older was imported 10 years ago from the Netherlands. It was filled with over 20 varieties of cutroses grown on substrate. The second more modern and stuffed with equipment for maximal climate control. Shading, fogging, cooling, irrigation and recirculation of water and nutrients. All this in need for the convenience of the substrate grown anthurium and some different outdoor horticultural crops getting the drain water as a fertilizer.

When asked for the marked situation, the company owner revealed two main trends. Ayer focuses mainly on regional customers in situations allowing it to adapt prices in accordance with local and regional demand. On the other hand international products, eg cutflowers from Africa, are slowly but surely also present on the same market. This puts somewhat pressure on prices and also reveals new products and/or quality standards. This doesn't mean local quality doesn't stand a chance, but making adaptation to this new situation a challenge for the ornamental horticultural industry around Antalya. Knowing it's market and customer, having increasingly technical skills and materials and also a nose for good business, still leaves the local industry with sufficient chances for success in the future.

It is in this perspective Doeke Faber, president of AIPH, handed over a bronze AIPH medal to his colleague of Ayer. Thus symbolizing the successful steps the company as representative of Turkish horticultural industry clearly took, but will also be able to take in the coming years.

