

## Annual inspection is a must

Whether the glasshouse has been recently built or has been used for years: The aim of a glasshouse complex is to produce the crop under ideal conditions as cost-effectively and profitably as possible. An important prerequisite is regular service and maintenance of the complex including the appliances. Hence Gartenbau-Versicherung recommends you have your glasshouses inspected yearly by a qualified contractor.

While Dutch glasshouse companies possess fixed maintenance contracts for quite some time, such contracts seem to be the exception in other countries. Only companies with close contacts to Dutch colleagues seem to have adopted this proactive approach.

In most other European countries maintenance of the glasshouses would seem to be conducted in a less structured manner. This means that the horticulturalist involves a specialist or a competent member of his team to inspect the glasshouses less regularly than if a maintenance contract was in place. For example, storm, can make it obvious that fixed maintenance contracts can make sense: In the event of a storm cracked glass, which is obviously weakened can cause a domino effect. However if a maintenance contract is in place the contracted company will have inspected and repaired any glass damage and ensured that an adequate reserve of glass sheets is always available.

An acceptable maintenance contract should include the following points:

- Annual maintenance programme
- Replacement of damaged roof or gable sheets
- Adjustment of the ventilation mechanics
- Greasing of gear racks
- Inspecting, cleaning and repairing of the rainwater drain system and gutters



Image 1: Use of the "roof bicycle" to inspect the glasshouse roof and clean the gutters

- Inspection of all doors
- Inspecting, cleaning and repairing of all condensate pipes

### In the event of a claim

Despite all preparations even the best looked-after glasshouse cannot be protected from damage occurrences. Top priority in the event of a claim will be to restore the climate conditions within the glasshouse as quickly as possible. With regular inspection and maintenance as well as prompt action in the event of damage, subsequent losses may be vitally reduced. The following highlights a few notes regarding limiting damage:

#### ➔ Adequate glass reserves and further materials

If sufficient amounts of glass sheets are held in reserve contractors are in a position to start repairing immediately. Also if the specifics of the roofing are

known, ordering of the right materials such as glass and glazing bars is much easier. In this context please consider the exact glass measurements, the system of the glazing bars and the glasshouse builder.

#### ➔ Availability of repair sets for glasshouse roofs

If your company has the necessary repair sets on stock smaller damages can be fixed instantaneously and worse can be prevented many times. Those sets can easily be used from the inside of the glasshouse so that the narrow gutters need not be accessed. The sets are made of plastic so that there is no risk of injury due to sharp edges.

#### ➔ Availability of contractors: avoidance of shortage

Regarding the availability of contractors, in cases where need is greatest there is often lack of manpower, particularly when severe weather has left its mark. In combination with a maintenance contract it is likely that



Image 3: Changing glass sheets with the aid of the repair shuttle

arrangements with contractors can be made much more timely.

### ➔ Measures for speedy repair

In order to get repair work done as fast as possible you should make the following arrangements:

- Ensure that there is the facility for adequate replenishment of new glass and adequate facilities for the disposal of damaged glass.
- Before repair commences make sure that gutters and ground are clean.
- For the accessibility of gutters, if means of transport like “gutter walking frames”, “roof bicycles or -sledges” are available, work will not only take place quicker but also safer (image 1).
- Provision of roof ladders for wide frame glasshouses.
- If a service platform is available, glass and transport means can easily be moved onto the roof and from bay to bay (image 2).

### ➔ Use of repair shuttle

With the help of a repair shuttle roof sheets may be replaced safely (im-

age 3). The handling is simple and there is no need for special training. Usually the corresponding manual is sufficient to allow the site manager or the company mechanic to employ the shuttle. Minor damages may be repaired in person and it is not necessary to wait for the glazing company. If repair is carried out quickly resultant damage is kept to a minimum. Repair work can be carried out completely externally, which prevents the spreading of diseases like viruses in tomato crops for example.

### ➔ Safety versus standard glass

If the glasshouse complex is fitted with safety glass this reduces the exposure for damage. In relation to standard (float) glass safety glass is several times stronger with the same weight and light transmission. Furthermore it offers the following advantages:

- There is no risk of larger and sharp-edged glass pieces falling down, which are unsafe and may cause further damage.
- When the glass sheets break damage to installations within the glasshouse, such as screens, is much more limited.



Image 2: Simple access to the roof via service platform

- Broken bits of glass may be removed much more easily from the gutters and the risk of injury is reduced drastically.
- If large glass sheets are in place the use of safety glass is a must anyway.

During the last few years the price for safety glass has reduced significantly. Please note that usually safety glass comes with longer delivery times. This should be taken into account when calculating an adequate glass reserve.

For further information please contact Towergate Allseasons, Hull.



Phone +44 / (0)1482 / 330 300  
 allseasons@towergate.co.uk  
 www.towergateallseasonsinsurance.co.uk

Extra information is also available via Gartenbau-Versicherung VVaG, Germany.



Phone: +49 / (0)611 / 56 94 – 0  
 service@gevau.de  
 www.gartenbau-versicherung.co.uk  
 www.gevau.com (for other countries)