

Multifunctional applications

Howicover's multifunctional character makes it suitable for various sectors in both traditional and organic horticulture.



Howicover in root vegetable cultivation

Howicover is often used for leek cultivation in the southern part of the Netherlands. Howicover is placed over the leek fields in November as a preventive measure to protect the crops against the cold. In North Holland, Howicover is used in the early spring to protect, among others, the cauliflowers from the cold and damage by hungry birds.

In Belgium, Howicover is also used to protect turnips and Chinese cabbage from cabbage root flies and other pests. And in Sweden, Howicover is used to protect strawberry plants both from the cold and trampling (reindeer). These animals often destroy the fields where horticultural fleece is used, but they do not trample those covered with Howicover.

Howicover in arboriculture

"We developed Howicover Green to cover young trees", explains Anton Hulsegge. Howicover Green is the same material but in a green colour which protects against the sun. The early spring sun in particular can be very damaging to various types of tree seedlings, Christmas trees, for example.



Howicover on sport fields

Howitec also supplies nets to the sports sector, including goal nets, tennis nets and volleyball nets. The sports sector discovered that Howicover was a fantastic covering for football fields. Various professional football clubs in the Netherlands and Belgium are now happily using Howicover. One club uses it to protect the newly seeded grass, another to catch the snow so that a nice green (artificial) grass field remains after a snowfall. Howicover has a clear energy-saving effect on heated sports fields.



Sustainable

Howicover's sustainable character is an incredibly important aspect in today's world where we are seeing a shift from traditional to organic cultivation. The voluminous fleece create a great deal of waste each year compared to Howicover which can be used for up to ten years. From a financial view, that is a drastic reduction in both investment and waste costs. Netting also significantly reduces the use of chemical pesticides. Cabbage root flies and larger insects can't lay their eggs on the crops as long as they are covered by Howicover.

Developments

"Thanks to the 18 years of knowledge and experience with Howicover and the very short lines with our supplier and the market, we can truly say we are experts in this area. It's for good reason we wanted our name associated with this product", says Anton Hulsegge. "Thanks to knowledge and know-how, we are able to further develop this product and we have obtained a leading role in the market". We see further developments in the areas of circular agriculture, organic agriculture and horticulture, sustainability and recycling.

Where

Howicover is available at your horticultural supplier.

HOWICOVER

the multifunctional climate netting



the success story!

HOWICOVER, the multifunctional climate netting

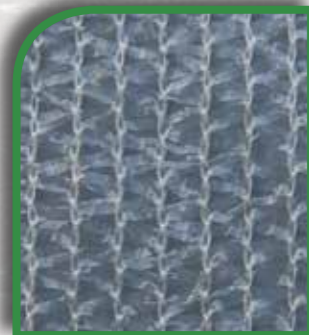
Now that the cold months are nipping at our heels and plants need protection from the frost, the demand for climate netting is increasing. Horticultural fleece used to be the most common crop covering, but in the past few years Howicover, the multifunctional climate netting from Howitec Netting in Bolsward, is gaining in popularity. But what is Howicover?

History

“Until the start of this century, crops were covered with horticultural fleece to protect them from the cold. There was really no other way to protect crops at the time”, according to Anton Hulsegge, Sales Manager for Howitec Netting. “But people weren’t really satisfied with the horticultural fleece. The fragile material and the climate underneath were both a disadvantage. That’s why we went in search of a high-quality and sustainable substitute.



Anton Hulsegge, sales manager



After extensive research and consultation with one of our European manufacturers, we developed a new climate netting together:

- A netting made out of transparent HDPE tape, with a more breathable structure and therefore a better climate under the netting.
- A uniquely soft netting that does not damage the plants.
- Netting can be used for many years, making it a sustainable option.

The Howicover climate netting was introduced to the Dutch market in 2002.

Pioneers

The market remained loyal to the trusted horticultural fleece for the first few years. People were sceptical and the reaction was often “we’re familiar with horticultural fleece, so we’ll take that”. The old saying ‘you won’t know until you try it’ was certainly applicable here. Howicover was being sold in those years, but the climate netting was not really embraced by the market. However, that all changed at the end of 2010, the coldest year in the last decade.



Howicover on leeks

In the southern part of the Netherlands, a few leek growers covered their leek plants with Howicover. The covered leek plants were not damaged by the cold. There was even an added benefit; there were no leaves in the stalks. This result was a good, high-quality harvest, contrary to the uncovered leek plants and those covered in horticultural fleece. Howicover had proven itself and demand for the product increased. In addition to the leek growers, other root vegetable growers saw the amazing benefits Howicover had to offer. They began using it on a large scale and to everyone’s satisfaction.



Testing

Meanwhile, independent Belgian research institutes realised that Howicover had a great deal more potential than just protecting against frost. Over the years, various tests were carried out at Proefstation voor de Groenteteelt v.z.w. in Sint Katelijne Waver (PSKW), Provinciaal Proefcentrum voor de Groenteteelt (PCG) in Kruishoutem and Inagro in Rumbeke. These tests showed that the netting can also be used in organic cultivation against cabbage root flies and many other types of insects

Howicover, the multifunctional climate netting.

Multifunctional traits

Howicover’s multifunctional characteristics include:

- **Protects**
The netting protects the crops against the elements, such as mild frost, snow, wind and rain. It also protects against cabbage root flies, larger insects, birds and small rodents.
- **Increases**
Howicover increases plants’ frost resistance by creating a dry environment.
- **Decreases**
The netting decreases temperature variations and (air) humidity as well as stress caused by dehydration.
- **Prevents**
Howicover prevents condensation and, therefore, also fungal development.
- **Savings**
Howicover can be used for many years so it is both a sustainable and effective solution. We know from experience that it can be used for up to ten seasons!
- **Accelerates**
A microclimate is created under the netting, which causes the seeds to germinate faster. This accelerates growth and stimulates deep root development. In a nutshell, it accelerates crop growth.
- **Wind reduction**
Howicover reduces wind force. The netting’s open structure allows it to move with the wind, thus preventing wind damage to the crops.
- **Early harvest**
Creating a microclimate under the netting leads to an earlier harvest.

