GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Suntory Opens New R&D Facility

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Suntory Flowers has opened a state-of-the-art research facility that will serve as its new base for product development and production for flowers and vegetables. Based in Higashi Omi, Shiga Prefecture in Japan, the Suntory Flowers Innovation Field marks the grand finale of a global 20-year anniversary celebration.

Since 2002, Suntory Flowers Limited has expanded its flower and vegetable seedling business globally in more than 30 countries. The newly established base is designed to enhance product development and production based on the concepts of new value creation and sustainable management.

Here, the Suntory Flowers team will develop new varieties and produce stock plants that will become the basis for products sold all over the world. Suntory Flowers Innovation Field will be the starting point with the aim of bringing joy and enrichment to customers through flowers and vegetables.

Features of the Suntory Flowers Innovation Field include:

• Modern greenhouse environmental controls that can be managed remotely from a smartphone, including temperature, humidity and solar radiation. LED lights ensure growth is unaffected by environmental factors, such as lack of sunlight. Robots equipped with image analysis AI will be used to improve efficiency sticking cuttings, increasing the speed and number of plants that are ready to root and multiply.

• Suntory Flowers will implement initiatives to reduce environmental impact. These include reducing greenhouse gas emissions to virtually zero by managing the greenhouses using electrical power for heating and cooling instead of heating with heavy oil; generating electricity by installing solar panels; and using electricity derived from renewable energy sources. This will reduce emissions by nearly 800 tons per year compared to the emissions generated using traditional heating equipment and fuel oil.

Suntory Flowers will also conserve water using an ebb-and-flow irrigation system, which circulates and reuses water necessary for plant growth. Water consumption will be reduced by about 80%, compared to not using an ebb-and-flow irrigation system. **GT**