



GPG Times

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GPG Strengthens LATAM Strawberry Nursery Supply Chain

Rupert Hargreaves



This week, Global Plant Genetics (GPG) announced the licensing of two new nurseries in Argentina: Kleppe S.A. and Vivero Altus. The appointment of these two nurseries is significant, as the requirement for improved-quality strawberry plants continues to increase across Latin America. Volumes are rising, alongside the rapid development of new varieties from the University of California breeding programme, all of which are managed in LATAM by GPG.

Both nurseries will propagate the existing “legacy” varieties, such as San Andreas and Fronteras, while also introducing more advanced replacement varieties in the near future. Particular attention is focused on three day-neutral varieties — UCD Royal Royce, UC Eclipse, and UC Golden Gate — each offering critical improvements over current market leaders San Andreas and Monterey. In addition, the day-neutral variety UCD Moxie is performing particularly well in Chile as an improvement to Monterey.

The two nurseries bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the market. Vivero Altus is a newly formed nursery based in El Maitén, Patagonia, owned by Laureano Delarmelina and Juan Vilar. Both have a long and proven track record in strawberry nursery management and fruit production. They are supported by Juan’s father, Ángel Vilar, who has served for many years as a technical advisor to several of Argentina’s strawberry plant producers.

Kleppe S.A. is a new entrant to the strawberry nursery sector, but is better known as one of Argentina’s two largest fruit exporters. The company is ideally located in Neuquén, in the Río Negro Valley, where it employs 3,700 people across 9,000 hectares — much of which is dedicated to intensive fruit production for export to more than 40 countries.



Commenting on the appointments, Rupert Hargreaves of Global Plant Genetics said

the timing of the two nurseries joining the business is ideal, as strawberry growers are constantly seeking improved varieties and higher plant quality. The depth of experience and professionalism they bring, along with opportunities to scale production through their combined resources, is exceptional. Growers throughout Latin America – as well as retailers, processors, and ultimately consumers – are looking for the next generation of strawberry varieties. Varieties developed by the University of California currently account for more than 90% of the Latin American strawberry market, and the introduction of replacements for San Andreas, and Fronteras from this programme will benefit growers, retailers, and consumers alike.



<https://viveroaltus.com.ar/>

We contacted Laureano Delarmelina for his views on the announcement.

"I have followed the new varieties from GPG and the University of California extensively over the last five years, travelling to see them in nine different countries. It is very clear that the new replacement varieties offer significant improvements in areas such as yield, disease resistance, and shelf life. While we will continue to support growers by producing plants of some legacy varieties, we have plans in place to rapidly expand plant numbers of the new varieties in order to meet anticipated grower demand in each country."

Commenting on entering the strawberry nursery business, Pablo Kleppe, owner of Kleppe S.A., said:

"From the outset, this opportunity looked like an exciting business prospect for my company. My team conducted an in-depth analysis of the industry, and we believe strongly that, with our existing assets – including high-quality sandy land in the right location, multiple warehouses, and extensive cold storage facilities – we are well placed to produce significant volumes of high-quality plants for the Latin American market. Our company is 100% focused on quality and consistency in everything we do, and we look forward to bringing that same level of professionalism and investment to the strawberry nursery sector. It will be an exciting venture to work with these varieties and with Rupert and his team at GPG."



<https://www.kleppe.com.ar/>



GPG Expands Portfolio with Five Pierce's Disease-Resistant Wine Grape Varieties

Claire Donkin & Rupert Hargreaves

Global Plant Genetics (GPG) is pleased to announce a significant expansion of its grape portfolio with the introduction of five Pierce's Disease-resistant wine grape varieties developed by the University of California, Davis. This milestone strengthens GPG's commitment to delivering advanced genetic solutions for modern viticulture.



GPG represents specialist grape rootstock genetics developed to address key challenges in vineyard production. Our focus has been on nematode-resistant grape rootstocks that support vineyard performance in regions where soil health, pest pressure, and regulatory change are critical considerations. As European representative for UC Davis grape rootstocks, GPG manages the licensing and protection of GRN1 and GRN3 across Europe. These rootstocks enable growers to establish vineyards in nematode-affected soils without soil sterilisation, while also providing resistance to phylloxera.

Expanding into Wine Grape Genetics

Building on this foundation, the GPG Grape team will now introduce five PD-resistant wine grape varieties to Europe:

- Camminare Noir (red)
- Paseante Noir (red)
- Errante Noir (red)
- Ambulo Blanc (white)
- Caminante Blanc (white)

Developed through decades of breeding at UC Davis, these varieties combine durable resistance to Pierce's Disease with strong fruit and wine quality, retaining key *Vitis vinifera* characteristics while offering resilience in PD-prone regions.

Growing Industry Recognition

The commercial relevance of these varieties is already gaining international attention. A recent feature in the Los Angeles Times explored the role of hybrid grapes in the future of California wine, highlighting plantings of varieties such as Ambulo Blanc and Paseante Noir in response to Pierce's Disease pressures. The article reflects a broader industry shift toward disease-resistant genetics as a sustainable alternative to vineyard removal or increased chemical intervention.

Supporting Resilient Viticulture

For European growers operating in areas where disease risk and environmental pressures are increasing, these five varieties represent a new generation of solutions — combining resilience, sustainability, and wine quality potential.

With the addition of these UC Davis wine grapes alongside GRN1 and GRN3 rootstocks, GPG continues to expand its portfolio of scientifically advanced genetics designed to help vineyards thrive in challenging conditions.

For further technical information on availability and licensing, please contact the GPG Grape team.

solutions@globalplantgenetics.com



A Growing Team, A Stronger Future

GPG

Since the start, GPG has experienced consistent and accelerated growth across every area of the business. From expanding our global reach to strengthening our breeding programmes and commercial partnerships, we have continued to scale while remaining focused on quality, innovation and long-term value.

A key driver behind our success is our people. This strategic team growth ensures we continue to deliver world-class genetics and maintain the high standards our growers and partners expect...

New Talent, New Roles, New Momentum

As part of our continued growth, we're pleased to share some exciting role developments within the team. These changes reflect both the depth of talent across the business and our commitment to recognising and nurturing expertise from within.

This positions GPG for the next phase of growth, enhancing our ability to support growers, licensees and retail partners across global markets.

Sadie Petchell

| Finance & Personnel Executive

Sadie Petchell will now take on the role of Finance and Personnel Executive, bringing her strong financial oversight and understanding of our internal operations to this expanded position. Her experience within the company will continue to play an important role in supporting the wider team.

Anna Spencer

| Senior Licensing & Plant Movement Administrator

Anna Spencer steps into the role of Senior Licensing & Plant Movement Administrator, building on her detailed knowledge of licensing processes and plant movement coordination. Her expertise and dedication will ensure we remain responsive and well-supported.

Izabela Komar-Socha

| PA & Seed Administrator

We're also delighted that Izabela Komar-Socha will now serve as PA, Seed Coordinator, a role that reflects her organisational strength and close involvement with seed coordination and team support.

These role progressions strengthen our operational capability and position us well for the next phase of growth. As we continue to evolve, we remain focused on supporting our partners and investing in the people who drive our success every day.



Bonnie Neugebauer

| Intellectual Property Executive

We are pleased to introduce Bonnie Neugebauer, who joins the business as an Intellectual Property Executive. Bonnie will lead the management and coordination of Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR) filings across multiple territories, ensuring the protection and strategic positioning of our varieties in key global markets. With a strong focus on regulatory compliance, portfolio management, and cross-border IP strategy, she will support the long-term commercial success of our genetics through structured, detail-driven intellectual property processes.

"Innovation only creates value when it is protected. I am committed to driving a proactive, internationally aligned PBR strategy that safeguards our genetics and reinforces our competitive advantage worldwide."

Dom

| Social Media & Marketing Executive

We are pleased to introduce Dom, who joins the business as the Social Media and Marketing Executive. Dom will lead GPG's social media platforms and strategy, enhancing how we engage and showcase global partners. With a strong focus on performance-driven marketing, he will support the promotion of our varieties through content creation and data-led campaigns.

"As GPG continues its global growth, my priority is to build structured, performance-driven social content, and assist with marketing activities to enhance visibility, drive engagement and support long-term commercial growth."

GPG Enters its Next Growth - New Office

📍 Stamford, UK

GPG

GPG is moving confidently into its next phase of growth with an exciting new chapter, following on from our 10th business anniversary, **GPG opens a NEW Office** - the opening of our permanent office in the historic town of Stamford.

Renowned for its heritage architecture and strong sense of community, Stamford provides a fitting backdrop for this milestone. Situated in the heart of Lincolnshire's thriving horticultural and agricultural landscape - part of the UK's renowned 'food basket', our new location places us among innovation, enterprise, and opportunity.

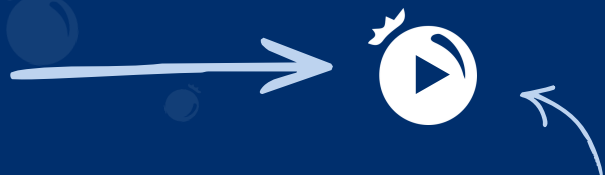
This move represents more than a change of address; it signals ambition.

Building on the foundations of our first decade, we are setting our sights on achieving 10x growth over the next 10 years - expanding our impact, strengthening partnerships, and continuing to invest in our people and services.

From our new home in Stamford, and beyond (from our team members located all over the globe), we look forward to shaping the next decade of GPG's success.



[Click here to see a video of Gladiator](#)



What a Week on the Ground Revealed About the Industry's Next Chapter in Chile

Jamie Petchell



Chile's Blueberry Transition: What a Week on the Ground Revealed About the Industry's Next Chapter
By Jamie Petchell, Co-founder, Global Plant Genetics
After spending a week in Chile visiting growers, nurseries, trial sites and tissue culture laboratories, Jamie Petchell, co-founder of Global Plant Genetics (GPG), says one message stood out clearly: Chile's blueberry industry is not in decline, but in deliberate transition.

According to Petchell, the sector is moving away from traditional varieties and into a new phase defined by genetics, production intensity and international competitiveness.

"The conversations I had were not about whether change is coming — but about how quickly it can be implemented, and which producers will be best positioned when the dust settles," he says.

From maturity to modernisation

Chile was one of the early pioneers of the global blueberry industry, helping to shape international markets and consumer demand.

However, Petchell believes that the same maturity now means the industry must continually renew itself in order to remain relevant.

Across multiple regions, he observed widespread replanting, modernised production systems and a growing reassessment of what constitutes a commercially viable variety.

"This is not just a varietal refresh — it is a structural shift," he explains.

One of the most consistent themes Petchell encountered was how central variety choice has become to long-term commercial survival. Growers, he says, are acutely aware that they are no longer competing solely with neighbouring farms, but with high-quality production from across Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia.

"Quality is no longer a differentiator — it is the baseline," Petchell notes. "The real competition now lies in consistency, shelf life, flavour, firmness, fruit size and post-harvest resilience."



Jamie Petchell, Rolando Garcia

This is particularly important for Chile's fresh export markets, where retailers are tightening specifications and consumers are becoming increasingly discerning. *"Without the right genetics, even the most experienced producers will struggle to maintain margins," he adds.*

Climate realities shaping decisions

Climate change is no longer an abstract discussion in Chile, according to Petchell — it is influencing practical decisions on the ground.

Formerly high-chill zones are now being reclassified as mid-chill or even low-chill, while heat tolerance and seasonal stability have become essential traits. *"This climatic shift is reshaping what breeders, nurseries and producers consider to be viable long-term options," he explains.*

Insights from the ground

Petchell says that visiting trials, nurseries and tissue culture laboratories together with GPG's licensed partners SynergiaBio, Viveros Hijuelas and Viveros Sunnyridge offered a valuable glimpse into how quickly the industry can move when aligned.

One of the most striking developments he observed was the rapid speed to production of newer low-chill varieties, significantly improving the economics of establishment years.

"Five or ten years ago, varietal change was often incremental," he says. "Today, it feels purposeful. This change is no longer theoretical — it is happening."

Chile's next phase

Looking ahead, Petchell believes Chile's blueberry industry will look markedly different within the next five to ten years.

He expects to see larger, more consolidated production areas with greater average field sizes, supported by industry-leading varieties capable of performing across extended windows.

"Success will not be defined by volume alone, but by consistency, fruit quality, cost efficiency and post-harvest performance, all traits being developed by our breeding partners at Oregon Blueberry and The University of Georgia," he says.

With harvesting costs and labour pressures unlikely to ease, the varieties that succeed will be those that reduce inputs, simplify management and still deliver premium fruit.

A strategic crossroads

Petchell concludes that Chile's future competitiveness will not be decided by hectares alone, but by decisions being made today around genetics, production systems and long-term planning. *"What I saw was not an industry looking backwards," he says. "It was one preparing itself for a more demanding, more competitive, and ultimately more rewarding future."*



MegasBlue

SynergiaBIO and GPG Expand Genetics Partnership Across Latin America

Jamie Petchell



Jamie Smith, Rolando Garcia, Ian Archer, Jamie Petchell

SynergiaBIO (CHI) and Global Plant Genetics (GPG) (UK) have established a new genetics partnership to develop and commercialise the next-generation of raspberry and blackberry genetics across South and Central America. Such an expanded partnership builds upon the companies' successful collaboration in representing many raspberry varieties emanating from The James Hutton Institute (UK), a leading centre for Rubus genetics and breeding, and which has led to several varieties being introduced into key Latin American production regions with encouraging results.

Under a new collaboration, SynergiaBIO will now play an active co-development role alongside GPG, contributing not only to the varietal evaluations, regional trialling, and commercial scaling of the new plant material, but also in steering the breeding strategy and objectives themselves, through the earliest stages, and with a view to identifying those most suitably specifically adapted to the diverse climatic conditions of South and Central America. Such a collaboration will focus on combining aspects of yield, fruit size, firmness, and flavour, with the resilience and resistance required for modern export supply chains and generating elite parental lines with traits targeted to modern market and production requirements.



<https://www.hutton.ac.uk/>

Rolando Garcia, Owner of SynergiaBIO, commented:

"Our experience introducing premium Rubus varieties has shown how important structured development and strong technical support are for growers. This next phase allows us to build longer-term genetic programmes that position South and Central American producers at the forefront of berry innovation, working closely with world-class breeding partners"

Jamie Petchell, Co-Founder and Director of GPG, added:

"Latin America continues to evolve as a highly strategic berry region. By strengthening our partnership with SynergiaBIO and extending our work with James Hutton Institute genetics, we are ensuring that new raspberry and blackberry cultivars are carefully selected, locally adapted and responsibly scaled for long-term commercial success."

Coordinated trial programmes are expected to commence shortly, reinforcing the partners' shared commitment to intellectual property integrity, disciplined variety rollout and sustainable growth across the Latin American berry sector.

SynergiaBIO

<https://www.synergiabio.com/>

Tropical Blue field visits in southern Spain

Jamie Petchell



These results are being seen repeatedly in full commercial production, not just in isolated trials.

Fruit quality was also a recurring theme, with growers highlighting attractive berries, excellent firmness and shelf-life – all critical for early-season programmes.

One particularly interesting focus during our visits was the use of late-summer “pinching” pruning, typically carried out in August in Huelva. Where applied thoughtfully, this technique is helping to create a more concentrated ripening window, reducing the number of harvest passes per plant. In practical terms, this is translating into improved picking efficiency and lower overall harvesting costs.

Spending time in the field with Soufiane was especially valuable. His close engagement with growers brings important local insight, and many of our discussions reinforced the need to align variety choice with real-world agronomy and operational realities.

Looking back, these visits confirmed that success in early production is not just about timing, but about combining earliness, consistency, fruit quality and efficiency – areas where Tropical Blue continues to perform strongly.

Looking back on Tropical Blue field visits in southern Spain

As we look back on the early part of the season, one of the most valuable trips for me was a series of field visits in Huelva, southern Spain, focused on commercial plantings of Tropical Blue.

Together with my colleague Soufiane, who is based in Spain and works closely with our grower partners in the region, I spent several days visiting production blocks across multiple sites.

As ever, time in the field – walking the rows and talking directly with growers – provides insights that can't be replicated elsewhere.

What stood out most clearly was the consistency of performance. Across both substrate and soil-based systems, Tropical Blue continues to demonstrate exceptionally early seasonality combined with strong precocity, delivering appreciable early yields from plantings now in their first, second and third harvests.



Fruit Logistica

GPG



Jamie Petchell, Soufiane Lahtati Belkas, Rupert Hargreaves

Fruit Logistica in Berlin proved to be a productive and energising week for GPG, with Jamie, Rupert and Soufiane on the ground representing the company. The event offered a valuable opportunity to meet face-to-face with partners, growers and key industry stakeholders, strengthening established relationships while opening the door to promising new collaborations.

Strategic conversations throughout the week centred on driving growth and preparing for the seasons ahead, with several encouraging opportunities emerging. With strong foundations in place and renewed alignment across the supply chain, there are certainly exciting times ahead for GPG.

AND FINALLY...



In the United States, strawberries are the most consumed fresh fruit by volume. The average American eats around 8 pounds of fresh strawberries per year, and that number keeps rising.



Connect with us!

