

# XTRA 5



What others are saying about this system and how it works for them.

**By Neda Simeonova**

**C**reating unique tags, stakes, signs and labels using on-site printing technology has gained popularity in the industry. The XTRA 5 thermal transfer printer from Horticultural Printers' OnSyte printing division is the latest addition to its list of printing resources. It is easy to use and comes with free setup and training.

This system gives growers and retailers control over their printing needs, providing them with the ability to tailor growing and care information for specific regions without adding expensive tag inventories. We talked to some system owners and asked them to share their experiences.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The XTRA 5 features a Wide-Open configuration to allow for easy tag/film loading. The entire print head mechanism pivots upward to give unobstructed access to the tag/label path. Fully adjustable tag/label guides yield more consistent operation and assure the media takes a straight path through the printer. This system prints materials with up to .024-inch thickness at a print speed of 3-8 inches per second. XTRA 5 has a versatile floating print head with light and heavy pressure settings, allowing the operator to choose head pressure based on thickness of the material and ensuring printing of high-quality graphics and logos.

Mark Begick, plant material sales manager of Begick Nursery & Garden, Big City, Mich., said he has been very happy with the system. "This printer produces high-quality

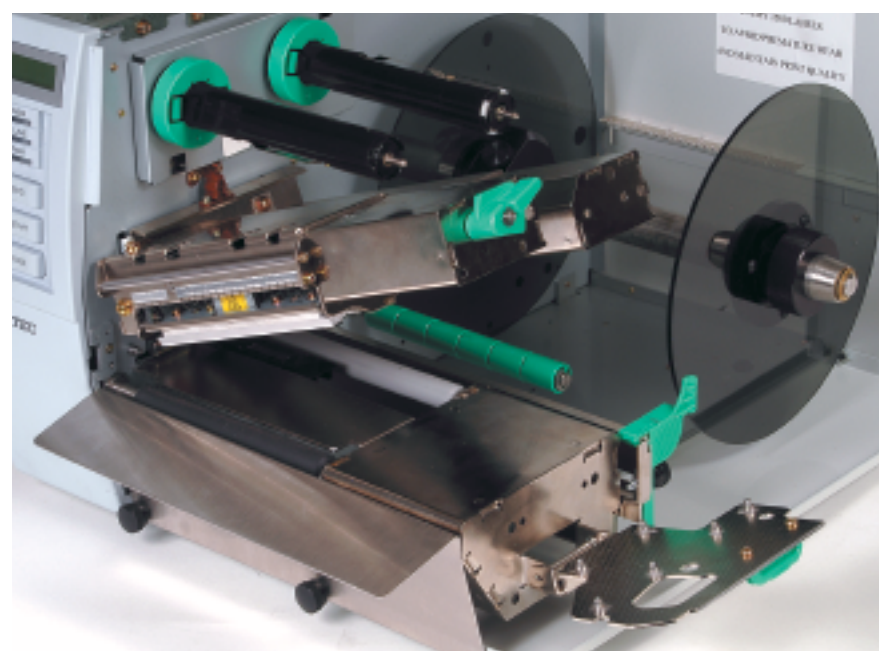
labels with much better readability. The printing is a lot darker and you can change the font size, so for example, you can make the retail price bold so it stands out."

Begick thinks the printer can be very beneficial to all types of businesses. "If you are doing your own growing, you can put some of the plant information on the label so regardless of the range of expertise of the garden center or landscaper, it has a clearer labeling," he explained. "People are looking for sun and shade plant information on the tag, for example. Set up can be a little bit longer, but in time, when you have all the information in the system's database, it would be very easy to use."

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

Debbie Armstrong, sales rep for Robbins Nursery, Sebring, Fla., has been using the printer to create plant labels and plans to do some signage as well. "Although each plant is individually tagged, the signage will provide additional information about the plant." She also explained that the company was very helpful and easy to work with. "The print head went bad after a couple of thousand labels, and they sent a new one and schooled me on how to install it. Now that we have everything back in line, it works wonderful," she said. "They showed us how to use it, and it is excellent and very easy to use once you get the hang of things."

Amy Lester, vice president of Growing Crazy, Titusville, Fla., also said she was happy with Horticultural Printers' customer service. "They have done a really nice job and have helped me through my



problems; yes, it's a lot to learn, but when I have questions, I call them, and they are there for me," she said. Lester has been using the printer to create labels on pottery, plants and also plans to do signs.

## UPKEEP

The XTRA 5 features easy access to the print head, media path and media sensor, and the tilting of the print head also allows it to be cleaned or changed easily if necessary, according to Horticultural Printers. In addition, the printer's media sensor is completely uncovered by the tilting head, allowing easy cleaning and removal of any obstruction, such as a label that may have come off the backing.

"If the print head gets dirty and you don't clean it regularly, you are not going to get a good print," Armstrong explained. "It also needs to be set up in a clean environment." Armstrong said she cleans the print head about every 1,500 labels and

makes sure there is no build up of dirt at least once a week. "You also need to keep your labels clean and dust-free because they create a lot of static and will attract dust."

## OVERVIEW

Overall, the system owners said they were happy with their purchase. Lester said it is very handy and great for making labels and organizing her signage. Begick is happy with the purchase because he can produce better quality labels. "It is just a lot cleaner and easy to read," he said. "And, it is definitely more professional if you have your logo and name on the label; it sets you apart from the places that still write in a magic marker." **GPN**

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*Neda Simeonova is associate editor for GPN. She can be reached by phone at (847) 391-1013 or E-mail at [nsimeonova@sgcmail.com](mailto:nsimeonova@sgcmail.com).*