

A really important part of what happens at Thanet Earth is our harvesting of tomatoes all year round. To achieve an economically-sustainable yield in the winter months then we have to supplement the natural light that the plants receive. All the tomato glasshouses at Thanet Earth are equipped with growlights which provide the plants with a light intensity that replicates the light levels of a typical spring day. One of our cucumber greenhouses is also lit. This helps extend our season and provide consumers with British-grown produce for longer.

These lights are usually switched on during the night, and can stay on until around 5pm in the afternoon. The plants still need time in darkness as part of their photosynthesis process, so they 'sleep' from sunset through until we turn the lights on again during the night.

We use a system of blinds in the greenhouses which serve a number of purposes:

- They help focus the light down onto the crop
- They help prevent the heat escaping through the roof
- They help maintain ideal humidity levels

Whilst the manufacture of these blinds is extremely precise and the maximum coverage possible is provided, for ventilation and humidity control purposes we have to leave small gaps where the blinds meet. Whilst the blinds we use are light abatement black-out blinds, because we're not able to close them completely flush, a glow may be seen.

Our coastal setting brings with it some additional challenges - when a heavy, low mist covers the site then we can suffer from a visible night glow from the lit glasshouses. This is caused by the escaping light being trapped and reflected, thereby having a magnifying effect.

Whilst light pollution is a serious issue, it should be noted that the growlights are **not** used during key production times in spring and summer. Natural light is sufficient for our crops from around April through until August or September (depending on light levels and plant performance).

There are few dwellings in the immediate vicinity of Thanet Earth. By leaving the lights off until 11pm at the earliest, we aim to minimise any impact of the lights on our neighbours.

The growlights are essential for efficient, top quality production. Without this technology Thanet Earth would not be a viable business. With the downward pressure on food prices, efficiency and scale in production are key to remaining competitive in the marketplace. Britain's salad producing future is reliant on this lit method of production. As an ultra-efficient CHP electricity-generating plant too, Thanet Earth can use its own energy to power the lights.

Our lights are working to help keep Britain producing salad crops, with significant employment and opportunity resulting from our site. We are proud of our crops and our production methods, and we're grateful for the overwhelming support we have received from local residents, from the local planning authority and from our customers.

Blinds in the roof prevent the majority of the light escaping, but there are necessary small gaps where they meet.



For further information, please email press@thanetearth.com