

*Donna Aldridge
Aldridge Studios
7503 West 54th Terrace
Overland Park, Kansas 66202*

*Rick Irwin, President
Ecologel USA, Inc.
Ocala, Florida 34471*

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Dear Mr. Irwin,

I'm delighted with the results of Hydretain! While so far I've used it only on my house plants and on hardy perennials over-wintering in a cold greenhouse, I'm excited by the possibilities I now look forward to in my garden this year, as well.

The first most obvious gift from Hydretain was the twelve day period I now have between waterings on my tropical hibiscus trees. Every past winter the poor things went drooping within a few days after watering. They barely survived when I was especially busy and inattentive. Now there hasn't been a single droopy leaf since I've been using Hydretain--and I've actually been busier than usual the last month. I have, by far, the largest number of flower buds on these hibiscus EVER and curiously enough, the buds seemed to spring up "suddenly" quite soon after I applied the Hydretain. I'm enjoying being able to give the hibiscus and my many other varied plants more water at one time, then not needing to water again for nearly two weeks. I rather imagine I could go a bit longer if I needed to since the plants show no sign whatsoever of any stress and I will experiment with a little longer watering time this month. Winters in the Kansas City area can be quite cold, below zero the last few nights, and the furnace runs quite a bit, drying out the air. Not having been able to mist or do other kindnesses to my plants with my hectic fall-winter schedule, I'm thankful for how very lusciously everything is growing. Actually, rather amazing!

Another thing I've noticed is that after applying Hydretain when I brought my house plants indoors this fall was that I had no yellowing leaves AT ALL. This is a first! It has always been disappointing to have wonderful new lush summer growth outdoors, then loose some of it, even though my painting studio is a very bright room. There is some normal shock that has been buffered or prevented by Hydretain. (And aside from the disappointment of loosing foliage, I got quite tired of cleaning up the messiness of the falling leaves!)

Summers can be very hot and dry in Kansas. I have large collections of several types of plants that are quite moisture-loving including 432 varieties of hostas, many ferns, 100's of different, newer Siberian, Japanese and Louisiana irises and others. From the experience I have had with Hydretain so far, I expect these plants to have much less stress and more lovely growth this year. Having a number of plants that are very rare or quite expensive, it is comforting to feel I have a bit of an edge now using Hydretain. Even with the least expensive plants, I enjoy them and want them to grow lush and healthy as possible.

In the garden I have been growing near each other several types of plants which have very different water requirements. I have made alterations in the soil mixtures for each plant, then watered very carefully. I now expect that I can give varying applications of Hydretain to the plants and then water the entire area more evenly, giving me less work and more time to enjoy the garden. I'm looking forward to experimenting with this rather amazing material on some plants that have been rather marginal here. This could open up some exciting new possibilities for gardeners here in Kansas City. I am also looking forward to spending a little less time watering in general outdoors as I have experienced indoors.

The perennials potted in the cold greenhouse seem to be faring quite well with very little attention.

I have experimented with other moisture-retaining methods, however needing to completely repot or dig and replant for best results demands far too much effort with well over 2000 different plants. I was aware that when placing crystals at a certain level, any roots that had grown beyond them were likely to be in trouble during "hard times". I wondered, as well, if instead of encouraging the roots to spread out in their normal expanding growth pattern, was I, by adding crystals to one area, causing the roots to grow toward the crystals and not seek out other nutrients beyond. I like very much being able to water in the Hydretain without having to disturb the soil around the roots what so ever. I do not need to interrupt the natural growth cycle. I can encourage root growth over a broad area in the garden by applying Hydretain to that entire broad area. I can add more or less Hydretain depending upon the requirements of the plant specie and of the particular plant in that particular place during the particular weather conditions. Some plants, such as Japanese iris, require tremendous amounts of moisture in the spring and summer, but want to be only slightly moist and quite well drained in the winter. Hydretain will allow that. By having a limited duration, changing seasonal requirements can be addressed.

I imagine that as I experiment further, I will find other advantages to Hydretain that have not yet occurred to me. Thank you very much for bringing this product to the gardening community. I am so delighted with the results of using Hydretain. I've already been spreading the word! Hydretain is a great product! It really works!

Sincerely,



Donna Aldridge

Board of Directors, The Loose Park Garden Center Association

Board of Directors, Region 18 of The American Iris Society

Immediate Past President, Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society

Recent Past President, The Greater Kansas City Iris Society

Member, The Mo-Kan Hermerocallis Society

Member, The Kansas City Water Garden Society