

# CASE STUDY



**CUSTOMER:** Lubera Edibles GmbH  
**LOCATION:** Strullendorf (Germany)  
**PROJECT:** Leaf Carrier for micro propagation

**Lubera**  
**Edibles** Young plants by Mayer

RUPERT MAYER, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LUBERA EDIBLES GMBH  
“Leaf Carrier brings significant space savings”



“For us, the main driving force to introduce the Leaf Carrier into our process was the very significant reduction of space,” says Rupert Mayer, managing director of Lubera Edibles GmbH. “In daily operations, we realized the many other advantages.” The company therefore continued to expand the number of Leaf Carrier growth trolleys step by step in recent years.

Lubera Edibles GmbH is a joint venture of the Swiss breeding company Lubera AG and the German Robert Mayer GmbH & Co. KG, and produces some 12 million edible plants annually. The catalog contains a wide range of ‘edible’ young plants: numerous varieties of soft fruits, fruits and a growing number of vegetables. Both companies have joined forces: the breeding of new edible varieties at Lubera is combined with product development and in vitro propagation at Mayer.

### 24,000 PLANTS PER LEAF CARRIER

Robert Mayer specializes in plant propagation through tissue culture. “We prefer to speak of micro propagation,” says Rupert Mayer. “The employees in our lab in Hungary take micro cuttings and put the unrooted cuttings into trays. For the rooting phase they are placed in the Leaf Carrier. Each Leaf Carrier holds 36 plant trays, with plugs of 0.5 cm diameter. Maximum height of the plants is 2 cm. Per trolley we have 15 growing layers, with no more than 9 to 10 cm between layers. This way, we can place about 24,000 plants in each Leaf Carrier. That is the tightest arrangement of the plants that is technically possible.



### ROOTING AND CONTROLLED PRE-HARDENING

“Our plants grow relatively quickly. The rooting phase takes 2 to 4 weeks for most crops, with a maximum of about 10 weeks for some crops. With the Leaf Carrier, growing and rooting times are reduced. In addition, the trolleys enable pre-hardening under controlled conditions in the laboratory. Most plants are intended for outdoor use, therefore the hardening is an essential part of our production process. After the pre-hardening, the trolleys go to the greenhouse, where the plants are further hardened. Here the plants are transplanted from the in vitro plugs to multitrays with 60 plants, the standard tray in which the plants are delivered to our customers. We have therefore made room in both the laboratory and the greenhouse for Leaf Carrier growth trolleys.”

### MORE FLEXIBILITY IN THE PROCESSING PROCESS

The production chain is fully integrated - from breeding and propagation to plant production and marketing, sales and distribution. “With both companies we have four production sites; in Switzerland, Hungary and two in Germany..

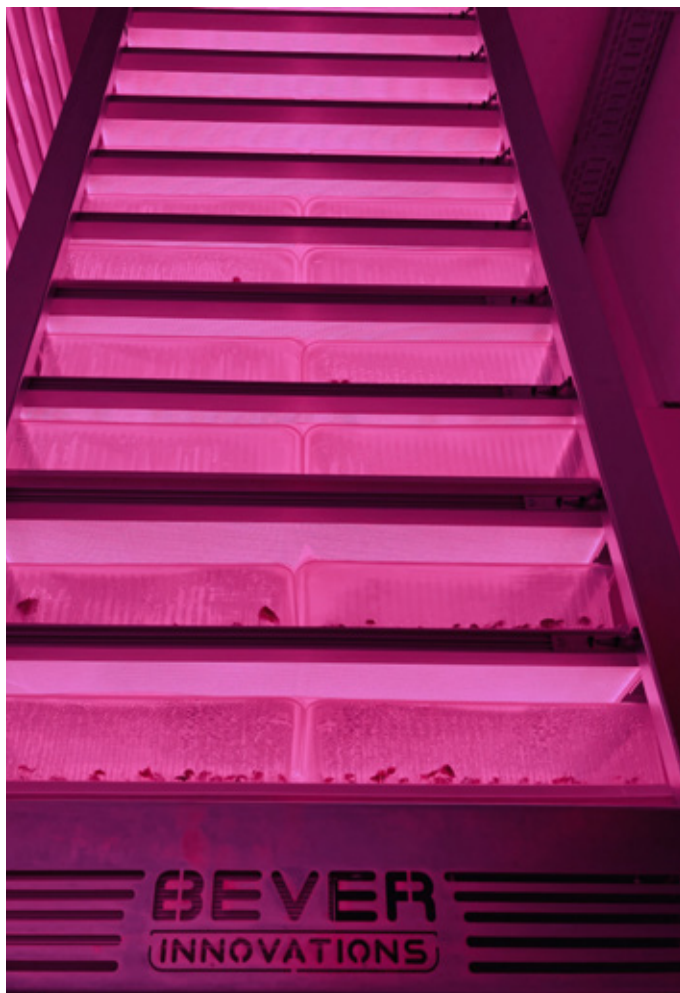
Pre-curing in the trolleys provides more flexibility to our process. Depending on the type of plant and the space available, we determine which stage takes place in which location. Working with mobile trolleys allows for faster and more efficient the internal transport between the cultivation area and the processing area.”

## REDUCED LOSSES

“Although sales are primarily in spring, propagation is a continuous process. With the rooting process about nine months of the year, the Leaf Carriers are in full use from February to October. All conditions under control, that is the motto in this business. The work process with the Leaf Carrier trolleys reduces risks. We have fewer losses. And out of a total of 10 million plants, even a 1% reduction in losses is a significant number of plants.”

## DELIVERED TO HORTICULTURAL GROWERS

“Our customers are mainly horticultural growers throughout Europe, who grow the plant for one vegetation period. They buy them in the spring and sell them in the fall or the following spring. Customers range from self-producing retail companies and food retailers to producers and suppliers to garden centers and DIY chains. Lubera Edibles operates exclusively in the B2B market.”



## MORE AND MORE VEGETABLES

Increasingly, Lubera Edibles is focusing on vegetables and expects to grow strongly in that segment in the coming years. In its catalog, the company has perennials, such as rhubarb, root vegetables such as sweet potato, yacon and oca, and fruit crops, such as tomatoes. In Hungary, a new production area for in vitro plugs has been put into operation and facilitates further production growth.

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