

# Gaining a competitive advantage through sustainability

Whilst the attention to climate change and the environment are at the center of the international debate, Growermetal keeps shaping a process based on energy optimisation, resource recovery and the cutting of emissions.

**S**ustainability is a key principle for the Italian washer manufacturer, a value that guides Growermetal towards a more conscious, responsible and environment-centric development strategy. "By shaping our production model, several factors are at work, such as the need to meet the demands of European market standards; to align with the 2015 EU Green Deal for carbon neutrality; as well as create a more sustainable enterprise with a reduced footprint," explains Paolo Cattaneo, CEO at Growermetal SpA. "Having a green vision can also lead to social and economic benefits, such as creating a better working environment for employees, making the company attractive for the stakeholders and bringing resource-saving benefits."

Growermetal has set itself four main objectives – the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the purpose of becoming carbon neutral; the reduction of company's footprint through structured actions aimed at enhancing the business environmental profile; the improvement of energy efficiency by using renewable sources and properly disposing waste materials; as well as the promotion of the circular economy based on the use of clean energy sources and waste reduction.

These targets are at the heart of the Greenmetal Project, an internal system aimed at aligning the company's conduct with the entire supply chain. "Our suppliers, materials, processes and resources are the pillars for environmental protection" states Raffaele Motta, HSE at Growermetal. "We select our partners so as to reduce any negative impact and ensure compliance with the most demanding environmental regulations. This is why we invest in low-impact materials for the production of our washers and parts, and at the same time we strive to minimise pollution and improve our environmental performance."

The project goes hand in hand with Growermetal's commitment to spreading a corporate culture and promoting sustainable practices, with initiatives designed to directly involve the staff. These activities range from awareness-raising meetings to the promotion of good daily habits, such as the installation of drinking water distributors, including specific training according to the department of the employees.

Among the most recent appointments, the company celebrated Safety Day on 28<sup>th</sup> April and took the occasion to present its current and future sustainability goals to the entire team, sharing its main achievements. "Our safety management, together with the correct



environmental policy and the alignment to our code of ethics, constitutes Growermetal's Corporate Social Responsibility," points out Raffaele. "With the Greenmetal Project, we have been able to verify how the direct commitment of the personnel, combined with investments in terms of structure, tools and process, is fundamental to the creation of a greener culture. Events like the Safety Day enable us to talk with the staff and collect useful data."

Over recent decades, many changes in the overall strategy have been introduced. While most have focused on reducing industrial waste, plastics, chemicals and pollutant emissions, others have been based on the recovery of materials and resources. This is the case of the system for automatic machines switch-off in case of inactivity, the reuse of oil and water from production processes and the recovery of heat from thermal treatment processes to warm Growermetal's departments.

In addition, the industrial rainwater harvesting system was implemented in May with the installation of two underground storage tanks, saving more than 2,000 cubic meters of tap water per year: "Thanks to the new system we will be able to exploit an alternative source of water, using natural resources more efficiently". As proof of the company's commitment, the internal performance is periodically measured and monitored by specific KPIs in order to assess the company's success. An attention that has led to the obtainment of the ISO 14001 certification for Growermetal Environmental Management System, which underlines the effort in creating an effective environmental policy.

Speaking of the future, the next targets are clear: "We are now working with our board of directors to achieve the carbon footprint certification and the ISO 50001 certification, which would offer important new tools for monitoring the sustainable conduct," reports Raffaele.

Defining attainable objectives, turning them into concrete actions, monitoring their progress and evaluating their results are the main steps that characterise the present and future approach to sustainable development: "As a company, we want to create a balance between our economic, social and environmental spheres, becoming an increasingly virtuous business model and creating mutual welfare for partners, employees and suppliers," adds Raffaele.

Growermetal's customers play a key role to. "We have activated projects with two important customers with the objective of aligning Growermetal's sustainable conduct to their realities. In this way, we had the opportunity to define and share medium-term and long-term sustainability goals together with our partners. Mutual collaboration is a great opportunity to achieve them and build trusting relationships in the fastener field. We look forward to seeing the results of this teamwork," finishes Raffaele. +

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NUTS, WASHERS + LOCKING SYSTEMS FEATURE

# Growermetal's portfolio provides enhanced safety

Growermetal's range of fasteners has seen an increased number of exclusive designs that join a strong heritage of standard washers, including a combination of geometries and performances – all united by the aim to provide safer and more efficient solutions.

**F**rom development to production, from treatments to quality control, Growermetal's manufacturing system has been structured to meet customers' expectations in terms of performance, efficiency and safety in every application.

Alongside its production capabilities, Growermetal is also able to supply a wide range of solutions, with its expanding portfolio of washers helping establish Growermetal's name in the national and international markets.

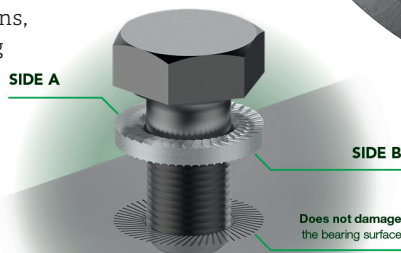
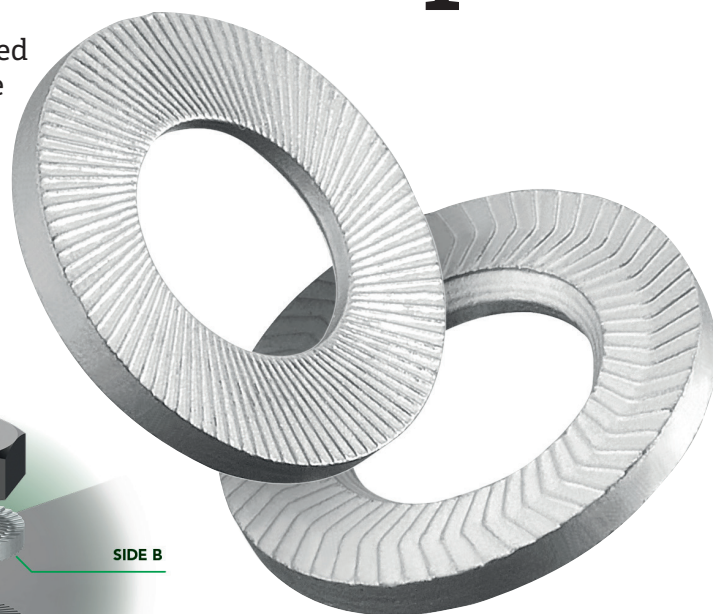
With more than 7,000 items produced, divided into washers and special parts according to customers specifications, the range offers many features such as high resistance to loosening in presence of vibrations, dynamic loads, heat, temperature, vibrations and other challenging conditions.

In terms of functions and industries, Growermetal's products makes it a trusted supplier for the automotive, railway and aerospace industries, and many other application fields.

During the last decade, Growermetal's investments have been focused on updating the production model through advanced machines and R&D projects. Today, the company is exploring new ways to safety, by combining the standard washers of its historical heritage with new designs – an approach that has led to a branded line characterised by exclusive geometries.

## Grower TenKeep®: differentiated surfaces, unparalleled lock

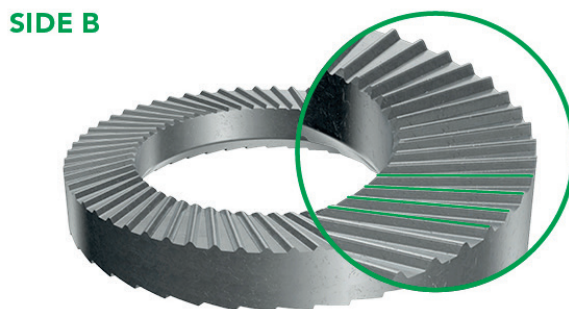
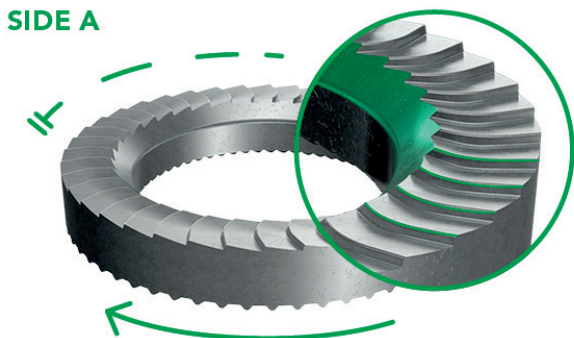
Grower TenKeep® is not only the first branded washer manufactured by Growermetal, it is also an example of the new path undertaken by the company. Launched and awarded



with the 3<sup>rd</sup> place at the Route to Fastener Innovation in 2019, it is the result of hundreds of different geometries tested by the R&D team, with the objective to provide the maximum performance against loosening of the bolted joints.

The result is a safety washer with two differentiated sides, where 'Side A' is in direct contact with the head of the screw or nut and 'Side B' touches the bearing surface. The two work in combination, whenever 'Side A' prevents the loosening of the bolted joint connection, the particular knurling of 'Side B' remains solid to the bearing surface without damaging it, thanks to the exceptional grip. In addition, the chamfer on the hole that characterises 'Side A' helps the user to orientate the washer correctly.

The different tests, which included the so-called 'Helicopter test', proved the washer to be successful even when subjected to dynamic loads or in presence of severe vibrations, typical of railway and infrastructures applications. Consequently, the performance of Grower TenKeep® is durable, with a high mechanical resistance and a very good level of untightening torque in comparison to the tightening torque.



## The preassembled set of Grower SpheraTech®

After being amongst the winners for the 2019 edition of the Route to Fastener Innovation competition, Growermetal was again a winner during the 2023 edition at Fastener Fair Global for its Grower SpheraTech®.

This product is the combination of a spherical top washer and a conical seat washer, which are among the most common locking technologies of the fastener sector. Where does the innovation of this product lie? One of the potential problems related to the use of similar products is washer loss, which is why Growermetal's team created the permanent assembly of the two parts, eliminating the risk of incorrect mounting and part loss during application.

In addition, Grower SpheraTech® facilitates the assembly while providing the same function of the traditional products, locking uneven or non-parallel bearing surfaces through the compensation of the angle of inclination. Thanks to the pieces coupling, it is possible to reach a superior locking function and preserve the bolted joint connection from damages or breakages caused by the bending of the head or the shank of the screw.

## New products to face every challenge

Recently, Growermetal has added a series of new washer solutions that integrated the wide portfolio of standard products. Developed by the company's engineers thanks to investments in R&D projects, the line includes cutting edge fastening systems.

An example are high thickness and precision flat washers, which are particularly suitable and widely used in the automotive industry. These special products are engineered and manufactured by the company according to customer's technical specifications and drawings, to guarantee the best performance for different applications.



Together with these washers, another innovation is constituted by metallic pieces with EPDM inserts. Through the integration of the EPDM elastomer in the composition, the parts benefit from a great resistance to extreme outdoor conditions or high temperatures and an improved compression performance. Growermetal is therefore able to develop and design moulded part projects, where the washer and the EPDM part are co-stamped or glued, with a remarkable improvement of the performance during application.

Finally, in order to boost the flexibility of its offer, Growermetal has specialised in the production of special blanked and bended parts, entirely designed, manufactured and engineered in-house by experienced technicians following customers specifications. A service that leads to the maximum customisation possible of the parts, in line with high demanding applications and to the company's aim to provide the most effective fastening solutions in the market. +

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