



**Grower profile**  
Name Le Quoc Su  
Location Carnarvon  
Property size 5.6ha  
Enterprises Tomato

# Grower profile

## Le Quoc Su



Vietnamese grower Le Quoc Su overcomes his language barrier and excels at Carnarvon tomato production school.

Le Quoc Su runs a small scale but very impressive tomato farm in Carnarvon, WA. What makes him notable amongst the Vietnamese growers in this area is his enthusiasm for constant learning and his smart thinking to overcome the language barrier to make his small scale tomato farm very efficient.

Su grew up on a remote province in far south of Vietnam, just off of the U minh melaleuca forest, a land rich with culture but so widespread with poverty and illiteracy that college isn't an option for most.

Seven years ago, by his fate he packed up his belongings and moved to Carnarvon, leaving the paddy rice field, and poor resourced jungles of his homeland for opportunity namely the chance to realise "the Australia dream".

Su settled in Carnarvon, WA, and initially took a job as a seasonal worker on a tomato farm making minimum wage. He didn't plan to work there long as his sights were set on progressing as a grower and owning his own farm. A year later he then moved to being a share farmer and then leased a 14 acres farm after a few years of making savings to realise his dream. But there was one obstacle in his way. He spoke no English.

**"As a grower you must constantly update technical information to progress, it is hard to do so without English," the Vietnamese-speaking tomato grower said.**

Determined to overcome the language barrier, Su first took an English course run under a Home Tutor Scheme, providing language assistance by a trained volunteer in the village. Although the former course could run only three days a week, each lesson lasted for two hours at lunch time. He pursued this English learning opportunity for three years until the teacher couple moved to other area. He was one of the last few students.



BY VO THE TRUYEN  
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Su then took the volunteer teachers' advice to take free English language courses provided by The Adult Migrant English Program under the form of distance learning through a package of sequenced texts and audiovisual material, and backed by regular telephone contact with a qualified teacher. Su was videoed and reported by the program as an enthusiast and hard working student in his remote area.

Such courses brought up Su's English to the basic level needed for daily communication. However, Su was still unable to speak or comprehend technical level English well enough. As a result Su appreciates help to understand technical information from his close Vietnamese friend, Duc, who grew up and was schooled in Australia with competent English. Interestingly, Duc has a reputation as of the most advanced growers in the area who is always keen to learn new knowledge and technology.

By going along with this friend, Su hardly misses a meeting or training course. Su benefits from sitting beside Duc who "coaches" him as the events go. Also, he gets his friend help to translate to captured the key points, such as "what" and "how to" or "when". With his friend's support Su does not hesitate to invite English-speaking trainers and consultants to visit his farm to ask for technical advice.

Not always having Duc around, Su has armed his mobile phone with an online English-Vietnamese dictionary and Google Translate to help him to deal with terms and new words in the chemical labels, invoices, market bills. These tools are also useful for him to enjoy learning the other online technical support tools such as the Yara TankmixIT tool on his mobile.

Life today is full of ambitions and ideas for Su. From here he would like to get his own land one day and to progress to an advanced level like his friends. He has also set goals to become fluent in English. It is already a long way from his beginnings in Vietnam. 