

# MAKING YOUR OWN POTTING SOIL

We have all of the items that you need right here in the store. There are a few things to remember when making your own potting soil:

## WATER HOLDING CAPABILITY

Potting soil needs to have something in it that holds water. Most commercial mixes use peat moss. Recently, some have switched to coconut coir because coconut has a neutral pH, and peat moss has a lower pH of around 5.0.

## DRAINAGE

Drainage means how fast a mix will dry out. To increase drainage, commercial mixes use perlite and bark. One can also use rocks or sand.

## PH

Most plants prefer a pH of 6.0-7.0, though there are a few that like a lower pH. Know the pH of the plants you are planting, and make sure it is correct. Note: when using peat moss with most vegetables and herbs, lime should be added to raise the pH.

## MAKING YOUR MIX

### *Seedling Mixes*

Seedling mixes should be light and contain a low nutrient content. Coconut coir is a great base for a seedling mix. Additionally, vermiculite is a standard in seedling mixes. One mix that we use is 70% coconut coir, 25% vermiculite, and 5% Worm Earth vermicompost.

### *Planting Mix*

Planting mixes will vary widely according to their uses. Complete mixes and general purpose mixes should consist of elements similar to those in Pro-Mix or Metro Mix. If using peat moss as a base, a wetting agent should be watered into the peat moss before starting. (Coco wet is cheap and organic!) Most mixes will consist of some ratio of peat, perlite, vermiculite (optional), Dolomitic lime, and a wetting agent (when using peat). Coconut can be substituted for peat.

## ADDING NUTRIENTS

Now on to the fun part! The amount of nutrient added to the mix will determine, or will be determined by, the amount of hand feeding you plan on doing. If avoiding hand feeding completely is your goal, slow release nutrients should be added to the mix. When considering soil amendments, one must think about the plants going in the mix, and make sure there is enough Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, Calcium, and micronutrient available for the specified plant.

Below are a few options for supplementing some of our general purpose mixes, but feel free to make your own!

### Mix #1:

For Vegetables, especially Tomatoes (makes 5 gallons): Blend 4 gallons of Sunshine Organic Mix or Pro-Mix with ½ cup Bone Meal (Phosphorous, Calcium), ½ cup Greensand (Potassium, Minerals), 3 tablespoons Kelp (Potassium, Micronutrients), and ½ gal Worm Earth (Nitrogen, Calcium, Micronutrients, Microbial Life).

### Mix#2:

For Herbs and Vegetables, Medium Feeding Plants (makes 5 gallons): Blend 4 gallons of Pro-Mix or Sunshine Organic Mix with ½ gallon Mushroom Compost (Microbial Life, NPK Approx 2-2-2) and ½ gal Manure (.5-.5-.5).

### Mix#3:

Herb Mix (makes 5 gallons): Blend 5 gallons Sunshine Organic Mix or Pro-Mix 4 Gallons with ½ gal Manure and 2 Cups Worm Earth Vermicompost.

### Mix #4:

Seedling Mix: Blend 70% coconut coir, 25% vermiculite, and 5% Worm Earth Vermicompost



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