

The Perfect Soil Mix for Container Growing

This mix is made in equal parts. Each part is an equal amount, no matter the ingredients. For instance, if using a cup as your measurement, then one cup is one part. If using a gallon, one gallon is one part.



Ingredient List:

Coco coir, made from the husks of coconuts. It's near neutral on the pH scale, holds moisture and makes a great growing medium.

Perlite, a volcanic mineral, traps air and allows for atmosphere to penetrate the root system. It further helps the soil remain loose.

Vermiculite, another volcanic mineral, traps water and keeps the soil from compacting or otherwise clumping.

Composted cow or steer manure. Provides much of the nutrients that plants need. You may also use your own compost, so long as it's been properly "aged." (As in broken down into a state that is balanced and not "hot" or otherwise chemically potent.) Try to get the fine screened cow manure as it's easier to work with. Find and stick with a good brand, as quality can greatly vary between brands.

I mix and store my container soil in food grade, five-gallon plastic buckets. These are identical to five-gallon paint buckets, except the plastic meets FDA food grade ratings. I use multiple buckets, each containing a separate ingredient, but you can just leave them in their original containers if you prefer.

The first ingredient is coco coir or a good coco coir seed starting mix like the one in the picture above. I happen to use Burpee organic seed starting mix as pictured above. This has a bit of fertilizer added that helps provide nutrition for the early stages of seedling growth.

But you can buy coco coir in bulk bricks. These are wrapped in cellophane, fully dehydrated, and will rapidly expand with water. Leave plenty of room in the bucket when you use brick based coir. The expansion of coco coir is dramatically satisfying as it fills the bucket. Add in the water until you have a soggy mess. If you over water, that's ok- the other ingredients will soak up the moisture. Go through the expanded coir carefully and make sure there are no dry spots. On occasion, a few chunks manage to stay clumped and need to be broken up with your fingers.

I use two parts of coco coir as my soil base.

I then add two parts of screened cow manure and mix thoroughly.

Take one part of vermiculite and one part of perlite and add them to your mix. Mix thoroughly and when finished, you will have a first-class container soil ready to be used in any container based system.

Repeat the process until you have enough to fill your containers.

If there is excess, you can simply put the lid on and store it for later.

I use this mix for all my containers, especially my vertical growing system. It's mild enough that it won't burn seedlings or seeds, yet robust enough to support plants through their early growth states and beyond.

It further promotes amazing root growth, giving the plants a perfectly moist, nutrient rich soil that is fully breathable for good root development.

As always, if you have any questions, please email me at JR@VerticalFarmMechanics.com

Happy Growing!

JR