

# *AgroCoir*® success in **CONTAINER PLANTS**

AgroCoir is one of the best possible components for growing perennials and woody ornamentals in long term containers. It is all natural organic matter derived from the husks of Mexican coconuts which are low in sodium and very rich in potassium. This sustainable fibrous product is milled and screened for each horticultural application. AgroCoir is resistant to excess compaction and decay making it an excellent component for larger long term containers. The ability to release tightly held water provides reserves for less frequent watering and longer shelf life under adverse conditions. Growers report that incorporation of 30% or more AgroCoir in a blend gives disease suppression and provides great water management properties which help in bedding plant production, performance and sales.

## **CONTAINER PLANT BLENDS**

AgroCoir is used in these three basic ways by container plant growers:

### **1. ADDING TO PREPARED BLENDS**

Simply add 2 parts AgroCoir medium or coarse grade to 3 parts of your favorite prepared blend (giving a 40% AgroCoir blend) and mix thoroughly before filling your containers. Adding some additional water (1 to 2 quarts per cubic foot) before mixing helps improve blend texture and maintain air porosity. Additional slow release fertilizer is also often incorporated at 4 to 8 lbs./Cu.Yd..

### **2. BLENDING WITH BARK/COMPOST**

A suggested peat and coir blend for container plants  
50% AgroCoir medium or coarse grade  
50% Bark/Compost (pH adjusted)  
3 to 4 lbs./Cu.Yd. Gypsum  
2 to 4 lb. / Cu.Yd. starter fertilizer  
4 to 8 oz./Cu.Yd. Surfactant  
10 to 15 gallons water

Combine components and mix thoroughly until uniformly blended. Do not over mix.

### **3. USING 100% COIR**

1 cubic yard AgroCoir medium or coarse grade  
2 to 4 lbs. of calcium nitrate  
1 to 2 lbs. of super phosphate  
½ to 1 lb. of Epsom salts  
3 to 5 lbs. gypsum  
1 to 2 oz. of trace element mix  
10 to 15 gallons of water

Combine components and add water and mix thoroughly until uniformly blended. Do not over mix.

**Note:** These formulations are intended only as a starting point. For the greatest success in your operation adjustments should be made to the blends.

## **STORAGE AND HANDLING**

Your AgroCoir blends are best used when freshly mixed. However, prepared mixes and pre-filled containers should be stored like other blends and should remain usable for many years when properly stored. The following suggestions will help maximize performance of your AgroCoir blends.

- Store in a clean dry area
- Do not over wet (saturate) the mix before storage
- Do not over compact moist blends
- Cover to avoid contamination
- Avoid contact by rodents and pests

## **WATER MANAGEMENT**

AgroCoir blends have higher available water than sphagnum peat blends when saturated. They also have greater air porosity and increased drainage thus avoiding water logging and the diseases associated with wet substrates. When sufficient quantities of AgroCoir are incorporated excess watering is not a problem and over saturation from mechanical and manual watering systems is greatly reduced. Drip-irrigation works very well with AgroCoir blends. Use of a surfactant (wetting agent) is always recommended but often not necessary due to the hydrophilic nature of AgroCoir in container production systems. In situations where crops dry down between watering the coir blends often take longer to reach wilt point. AgroCoir absorbs water readily and evenly distributes even small quantities of water within the substrate.

## **FERTILIZER & pH MANAGEMENT**

The high potassium levels provided in AgroCoir make nutrient management easy. For Container crops use of 20-10-20 at a rate of 100 to 150 ppm N in rotation with calcium nitrate and an occasional application of Epsom salts will maximize performance. It is suggested that a 250 to 400 ppm N solution of calcium nitrate be used for watering in the crop at planting to encourage strong root growth. Repeated use of the calcium nitrate about once every two to three weeks is advised. Additional benefits are often observed from applications of Epsom salts applied at a rate of 1 to 2 Lbs. per 100 gallons every 2 to 4 weeks. Leaching the crop is seldom necessary but may be helpful on salt sensitive crops due to the high levels of potassium naturally in the AgroCoir. Slow release fertilizers are incorporated at a little lower rate than recommended due to the higher nutrient holding ability. Management of substrate pH is less critical in blends containing AgroCoir due to the higher C.E.C. buffer. However, it is still advised to use the normal routine of adjusting water alkalinity and selecting fertilizers to help maintain the desired media pH.