

# POTTING MATERIALS

By  
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1. PINE BARK; It is a natural medium, used more than any other potting material. It can be used untreated, but not recommended. Bark that is being used today, has been treated in one of the following ways; By being boiled, composted, limed and aged. The treatments are used to remove the oils and resins from Australian barks and to raise the PH on the bark surface. New bark can take a lot of watering to thoroughly wet the bark surface, using a wetting agent does help. Bark can rot or decay with age, it requires slightly higher nitrogen fertilizer than most other potting materials. Life span is about 2 to 3 years.



Pine Bark



Coconut Coir Chunks

2. COCONUT CHUNKS; Coconut Chunks is the long lasting, thick coarse organic fibre from the outer husk of the coconut. Coconut fibre is quick draining and capable of holding twice its weight in water. It does not break down quickly, aerates well, cost effective and particularly effective in resisting rot, fungus and other infestations. A complete fertilizer is required. Life span is 3 to 4 years. Water less than bark.



Perlite

3. PERLITE; It is a specially processed, ever lasting volcanic material, easy to work with, easily obtained, drains and aerates well and does not break down. It does not compact, keeps mix loose and helps water retention. Mainly used with peat, sphagnum moss, coco fibre and bark. A complete balanced fertilizer is required.

When this product is handled dry, a mask is required because the dust can infect the lungs. It is recommended that it be washed before using.



Lime Stone Chips

LIME STONE CHIPS; This is a great help to the plant and the potting mix. Because of its weight it helps to keep the repotted plant upright, it does not decay and improves drainage and aeration. It releases very small amounts of lime when watered which can be taken up by the plant. Resists the build up of salt and helps to stop the mixture from becoming too acid in PH.



Charcoal

No5. CHARCOAL; Charcoal comes from burnt hardwood, it is sturdy, light weight, chunky, black material that does not deteriorate. It last much longer than most other potting materials. It needs more water than bark. It does have a tendency to retain salts and requires to be flushed more often than other materials. It produces no nutrients. It requires a complete fertilizer. Life span is just about everlasting, but is usually gauged by having to repot the plant.



Gravel/Stones

## GRAVEL/STONES

They are an inert, inorganic aggregate that does not decompose and when used in mixes, it resists decay and improves drainage and aeration. Because of its weight it helps to keep the newly repotted plant upright. It has no nutrients, they are used in a more hydroponic role and needs a complete balanced fertilizer. There is no breakdown with this produce. Water twice weekly.



Scoria

## LAVA ROCK/SCORIA

This rock is inorganic, igneous rock, composed chiefly of silica and metallic oxides, formed by volcanic flow. It is porous and hold moisture, decay resistance and allows the mix to stay open and aerated. Resists rot and fungal problems. Salt build up needs to be flushed on a regular basis. A complete fertilizer is required. Life span is 3 to 5 years. Water weekly.



## PEAT MOSS

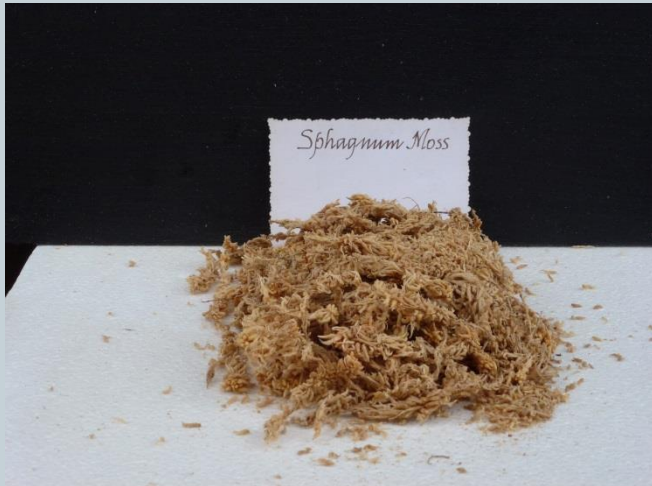
It is the partially decayed organic debris that forms from sphagnum moss. It is dug from bogs in huge bricks, dried for 1 to 1 ½ years and then it can be cut to small chunks and ground to size. The chunkier coarse peat is more suitable for orchid growing than horticultural peat. It has a PH range from 3.5 to 5.. Granulated peat moss can hold at least seven times its weight in water. A mix of 50/50 to 10:80 of peat moss to perlite has been proven to be ideal. Water once a week and use a complete fertilizer. Chunky Peat Moss is not readily available here.



Peat Moss

## SPHAGNUM MOSS

It is the soft, spongy moss found on the surface of bogs. It is capable of holding ten times its weight in water. Sphagnum moss has an antiseptic quality that inhibits 'damping off' fungal disease. It is a very good aid to ailing plants and seedlings, a helpful medium to nurse along otherwise reluctant orchids. Water weekly but in hot weather more frequently. DO NOT LET DRY OUT.



Sphagnum Moss

A complete fertilizer is required



## CORK

Cork is the thick lightweight bark from the cork oak tree. It can be used for orchid mount/slabs, or in 'nuggets' for potting orchids. It has no nutrients, does not hold much water, needs to be water more often than bark. A complete fertilizer is required. Life span is 2 to 3 years



## STYROFOAM

It is a trademark for inert, synthetic, polystyrene foam. It provides no nutrients. It is light, white and durable, a solid plastic with closed foam spores that cannot take up water. Styrofoam only gets wet on its surface, does not rot, nor is it susceptible to fungus. It is used to aerate the potting mix and if used in the bottom of the pot, provides very good drainage. It is cheap to obtain and lasts indefinitely. A complete fertilizer is used with this product.



## POTTING MIXTURES

Each Grower uses various combinations of one or more of the above potting materials, depending on the genera growing requirements and their shade or hot house conditions. The above materials can cover all genera. This mixture adjacent is made up of bark, perlite, coco junks and lime stone chips.