

Cocopeat - suitable component for potting mixture

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Cocopeat is the binding material that comes from the fibre fraction of coconut husks. It is obtained as a bi-product during the processing of coconut husks for extracting long coir fibres. Cocopeat is also known as coir pith, coir fibre pith or coir dust. It is usually seen heaped near the coir producing firms and is available as free or at cheap rate.

Cocopeat proves to be an ideal component for mixing with potting mixture. Potting mixture is the common medium widely used for growing various types of plants and it is prepared by mixing soil, sand and farm yard manure (compost) in 1:1:1 proportion. Cocopeat with potting mixture improves the porosity, wettability, water holding capacity and cation exchange capacity of potting mixture. It can be used for both indoor and outdoor purposes. Depending on the purpose, cocopeat may be added to an extent of 20 to 50 per cent by volume to the potting mixture. Its pH ranges from 5.5 to 6.5.

Dried cocopeat is available commercially as bales, blocks, bricks etc. These can be re-hydrated into bulk form and easily incorporated into potting mixture. Whole sale nurseries purchase potting mixture in large quantities from whole sale suppliers. The suppliers may mix cocopeat in sufficient quantity before selling to nurseries. Nursery owners can also blend cocopeat with potting mixture in their own way according to need.

Benefits of using potting mixture blended with cocopeat

- **High porosity, water holding capacity (WHC) and cation exchange capacity (CEC)**

Due to high porosity, high WHC (70 per cent) and cation exchange capacity, it is more beneficial than all other growing media in reducing the water requirement of plants as well as the frequency of re-watering.

- **Healthier plants**

The plants growing in potting mixture containing cocopeat produce stronger and more fibrous roots. This enables them to absorb more water and nutrients and thereby improving their health and quality.

- **High quality plants**

Cocopeat potting mixture helps produce well grown and high quality products with excellent uniform appearance. Moreover, it facilitates easy care in long term display situations. These plants also express good shelf life in retail shops or exhibition.

- **High value for potting mixture**

Due to the fact that the cocopeat added potting mixture holds more water and allows plant to grow healthier compared to other media, the value of these mixtures is markedly increased by 10 to 50 per cent.

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