

Growing Media Statement

All growing media used by Rochfords is peat reduced or peat free. Our mixes are designed specifically for the crops we grow to ensure best quality plants; they contain a mix of peat alternatives including wood fibre, bark and coir. All mixes for 2019 are 30-50% peat reduced.

Rochfords first peat free commercial crop was grown in 2011, peat free crops have been grown in subsequent years.

Since 2018 a new mix has been used which is 50% peat reduced. It is hoped this product will reduce the liverwort present in the pots leading to improved plant quality.

Rochfords have completed regular in-house trials of peat reduced and peat free growing media mixes since 2004. We have been able to reduce the peat portion in all our crop mixes based on the results of these trials. We have also trialed different additives to the mixes to help enhance growth and eliminate the potential negative effects of the peat alternatives.

For the 2017/18 growing season the base fertilizer levels were reduced across all mixes. This was in response to findings in the AHDB fellowship project CP095.

All trials are monitored and the results are held under Product Development. Trials are completed on both sites, in discussion with Paul Rochford our Managing Director and the growing media companies. Due to the large range of plants grown by Rochfords we have to approach major changes in our compost mixes gradually to ensure maintenance of plant quality across the species grown.

As part of our BOPP certification (see below) we review the Environmental policies, practices and accreditation of our Growing Media suppliers.

- Our growing media suppliers have all confirmed that the peat used is from sustainable non-SSSI sources. And that the alternatives used are also from sustainable sources, ensuring a sustainable growing media.

- Our suppliers: Sinclair Pro, ICL, Bulrush and Jiffy all hold ISO9001-2008 certification.

- They are all members of The Growing Media Association (GMA). The GMA is committed to peat reduction/ production of a sustainable growing media.

Rochfords participated in the DEFRA consultation on reducing the horticultural use of peat in England and is following the work of the Growing Media Initiative. Rochfords' involvement with The Horticultural Trades Association ensures we are up to date and working on the issues. We have also worked with the RHS on growing media projects.

Quality Management

Rochfords have been a fully certificated member of the British Ornamental Plant Producers Scheme (BOPP) since 2006 and play an active role in maintaining the scheme. Rebecca Grant, Horticultural Development Manager, is the current Chairman of the scheme. BOPP aims to set high standards of professionalism in the way in which certificated businesses operate, and through unbiased and effective evaluation by a UKAS Accredited Certification Body and BOPP inspectors, to ensure these standards are maintained. The ultimate objective is to ensure that UK customers can have complete confidence when dealing with BOPP Certificated suppliers. The criteria include legal, environmental and quality requirements.

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