

## **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.

- Growing media mixes for 2022 are either 30% or 100% peat free.
- Rochfords first peat free commercial crop was grown in 2011, peat free mixes have been used each year since 2011. For 2021 50% of stock potted by Rochfords was peat free. For 2022 it is 80%.

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 help enhance growth and eliminate the potential negative effects of the peat alternatives.

- Base fertilizer levels were reduced across all mixes 2017/18. In response to findings in the AHDB project CP095.
- Decreasing the peat content of the mixes used has led to improved liverwort control, improving plant quality.

All trials are monitored; in discussion with Paul Rochford our Managing Director and the growing media companies. Due to the large range of plants grown major changes in the growing media mixes are gradually introduced to ensure maintenance of plant quality across the species grown.

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

- Our growing media suppliers have 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 current suppliers, **ICL, Westland and Bulrush hold ISO certification** and are 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 Ornamental Horticulture Assurance Scheme (OHAS) since 2006 and play an active role in maintaining the scheme. Rebecca Grant, Horticultural Development Manager, is past Chairman of the scheme. OHAS 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 OHAS inspectors, to ensure these standards are maintained. The ultimate objective is to ensure that UK customers can have complete confidence when dealing with OHAS Certificated suppliers. The criteria includes legal, environmental and quality requirements.*