



DIY Growing Mix Recipes

CONTAINERS | RAISED BEDS | SEED STARTING

Three practical, mix-it-yourself recipes designed for home gardeners, with clear quantities and simple adjustments for drainage and moisture.

STARTING POINT: The container and raised-bed recipes each begin with one 0.75-cu-ft bag of garden soil. The seed-starting recipe is intentionally soil-free.

MIX. PLANT. LEARN. GROW.

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1

Large-Container Garden Mix

A lighter outdoor mix for large pots and planters

INGREDIENT	QUANTITY
Bagged garden soil	0.75 cu ft
Coco coir or pre-moistened peat moss	0.75 cu ft
Perlite or fine pumice	0.50 cu ft
Finished, screened compost	0.375 cu ft

YIELD: about 2.375 cu ft / 17.8 gal

How to mix it

- 1 Fluff the base.** Break apart the garden soil and remove large sticks, stones, or compacted chunks.
- 2 Add moisture-holding material.** Blend in the coir or peat until no dense pockets remain.
- 3 Add air space.** Fold in the perlite or pumice gently so it stays evenly distributed.
- 4 Finish with compost.** Mix thoroughly, then moisten until the blend feels evenly damp but not muddy.
- 5 Fill loosely.** Place in a container with open drainage holes. Do not pack the mix down.

IMPORTANT

Use this recipe for **large outdoor containers**, not seed trays or small houseplant pots. Garden soil alone is too dense for containers; the coir and perlite provide the needed air and drainage.

2

Raised-Bed Garden Mix

A balanced blend for vegetables, herbs, and flowers

INGREDIENT	QUANTITY
Bagged garden soil	0.75 cu ft
Finished compost	0.75 cu ft
Composted pine bark or soil conditioner	0.75 cu ft
Coco coir or pre-moistened peat moss	0.375 cu ft
Perlite or fine pumice	0.25 cu ft

YIELD: about 2.875 cu ft / 21.5 gal

How to mix it

- 1 Combine the bulk ingredients.** Mix the garden soil, compost, and composted pine bark on a tarp or in a wheelbarrow.
- 2 Add moisture retention.** Work in the coir or peat, breaking apart any dry clumps.
- 3 Add drainage.** Fold in the perlite or pumice until it is evenly visible throughout the blend.
- 4 Moisten and rest.** Water lightly, mix again, and let the blend settle before planting.

SCALING THE RECIPE

Bed volume = length x width x soil depth. Divide total cubic feet by **2.875** to estimate the number of batches.

FLORIDA RAIN CHECK

If the bed stays wet after heavy rain, add more pine bark or perlite. Never block drainage at the bottom of the bed.

3

Soil-Free Seed-Starting Mix

Fine, clean, and airy for germinating seeds

INGREDIENT	QUANTITY
Fine coco coir or sphagnum peat moss	8 cups
Fine vermiculite	4 cups
Fine perlite	4 cups

YIELD: about 1 gallon

How to mix it

- 1 Use clean materials.** Sanitize the bowl, scoop, seed trays, and hands before mixing.
- 2 Moisten the base first.** Add water gradually to the coir or peat until it is damp and fluffy, not dripping.
- 3 Blend the texture.** Mix in the vermiculite, then fold in the perlite until evenly distributed.
- 4 Fill without packing.** Add mix to cells, tap the tray gently, sow at the depth listed on the seed packet, and label.
- 5 Water gently.** Bottom-water when possible and keep the medium moist, never saturated.

LEAVE THESE OUT

No garden soil, unfinished compost, or fertilizer at sowing. They can introduce pathogens, create a coarse texture, or stress delicate new roots. Begin light feeding after true leaves develop, following the fertilizer label.

Before You Mix

A short checklist for better texture, drainage, and consistency



Choose the right soil

Use a bag labeled garden soil for the two garden recipes. Never use soil dug from the yard in containers.



Pre-moisten dusty materials

Lightly dampen coir, peat, perlite, and vermiculite before mixing. Consider a dust mask and eye protection.



Use mature compost

Compost should smell earthy and be fully finished. Avoid fresh manure and incompletely composted material.



Check the squeeze test

A damp handful should hold briefly, then crumble when touched. A muddy clump needs more aeration.



Fertilize separately

Ingredient fertility varies. Select fertilizer for the crop and follow its label rather than adding a guessed amount.



Adjust after watering

If water pools, add aeration. If the mix dries too quickly, add a little more coir, peat, or finished compost.

Helpful sources

UF/IFAS Extension - Gardening in Raised Beds

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP472>

Penn State Extension - Potting Media and Plant Propagation

<https://extension.psu.edu/potting-media-and-plant-propagation>

University of Minnesota Extension - Starting Gardens and Containers

<https://extension.umn.edu/news/starting-your-garden-and-containers-right>

Garden note: Bagged products vary in particle size, moisture, and ingredients. Treat these recipes as practical starting points and adjust texture after the first thorough watering.