

7 SOIL BLOCK MIX RECIPES

1.

Recipe for LARGE 2" Ladbrooke soil blocks:

- 5 Gal sustainable peat (we've found coconut coir is too crumbly to work well in soil blocks)
- 5 Gal Compost
- ¾ Gal Sand
- ¾ Gal Vermiculite
- screen peat and compost through 1/4" screen or hardware cloth so no chunks

Screen the dry materials – The above ingredients need to be passed through a sieve (we use a 1/4" hardware cloth nailed to a frame) in order to make sure they're broken up and free of any "chunks." Once sifted, thoroughly mix all dry ingredients together in a large bucket or wheelbarrow. Some people also like to mix in some all-purpose organic mineral fertilizer at this point to reduce/eliminate the need to apply dilute liquid fertilizer as the seedlings grow.

Wet – Once your dry ingredients are mixed, stir in water, then let mix sit for 30 minutes before blocking. You want the consistency of the mix to be like wet oatmeal – if it's too dry, your blocks won't hold together.

2.

Recipe for SMALL ¾" micro Ladbrooke soil blocks:

- 4 parts peat moss (we've found coconut coir is too crumbly to work well in soil blocks)
- 1 part compost
- mix all ingredients together
- some people also like to mix in all-purpose organic mineral fertilizer at this point to reduce/eliminate the need to apply dilute liquid fertilizer as the seedlings grow.

Screen the dry materials – The above ingredients need to be passed through a sieve (we use a 1/4" hardware cloth nailed to a frame) in order to make sure they're broken up and free of any "chunks."

Wet – Once your dry ingredients are mixed, stir in water, then let mix sit for 30 minutes to absorb the liquid. You want the final consistency of the mix to be like wet oatmeal. The soil blockers will squeeze out a lot of water.

3.

David Tresemer, author of the Ladbrooke Soil Blocker Booklet *Transplants in Soil Blocks*, has a favorite recipe:

- 4 parts peat moss
- 1 part well-rotted compost
- 1 handful of ground calcium limestone for every cubic foot of mixture
- 1 handful of ground basalt rock powder

4.

In Eliot Coleman's outstanding book, *The New Organic Grower*, he devised a soil block recipe so perfectly proportioned that it has become an industry standard. We paraphrase his recipe here with a nod of respect to this guru of organic growing:

Soil Block Recipe

**Use a 10-quart bucket and standard kitchen measuring cups to mix the following ingredients:

- 3 buckets finely milled peat
- ½ cup lime (use agricultural lime if you can get it)

Mix then add:

- 2 buckets coarse sand

- 3 cups base fertilizer

Mix again and add:

- 1 bucket garden soil or bagged topsoil

- 2 buckets screened compost

Mix all ingredients thoroughly

This recipe produces about 2 bushels of soil block mix.

Coleman explains:

"The lime is combined with the peat because that is the most acidic ingredient. Then the sand or perlite is added. The base fertilizer is mixed in next. By incorporating the dry supplemental ingredients with the peat in this manner, they will be distributed as uniformly as possible throughout the medium. Next add the soil and compost and mix thoroughly a final time."

5.

Austin's Soil Blend

- 3 parts Peat Moss
- 2 parts Worm Castings
- 1 part Compost

6.

The Gardener's Workshop Soil Blocking Mix:

- 16 cups Peat Moss
- 4 cups Compost
- ¼ cup green sand
- ¼ cup rock phosphate powder

3 parts dry to 1 part water

7.

ORGANIC SOIL BLOCKING RECIPE – PATCHES OF GREEN

Soil blocking mix is easy to make. Following is the recipe Patches of Green has used and sold commercially, using organic compost and other ingredients available from any garden center. Other recipes are available or can be made from starting with another commercial soil mix from your local garden store.

It is best to wet your mix some hours before you make blocks to improve penetration of water into the planting medium.

* These amounts are based on each '1 Part' above equaling an '8 Qt. bucket', or 10 buckets total of bulk soil materials.

Adjust nutrients according to the total quantity being made.

- 3 ½ Parts Organic Compost, free of weed seeds and disease.
- 2 Parts each Peat Moss, Coco Coir, and Small Pumice / Perlite
- ½ Part Worm Castings
- 1 cup each of:
 - Feather Meal (nitrogen)- helps plant foliage grow strong
 - Rock Phosphate (phosphorus)- helps roots, flowers, and fruit develop
 - Greensand (potassium)- important for overall plant health