



Go Beyond Checking the Box

GROWING MEDIA QUICK COMPARISON GUIDE

Growing media does much more than support plant health. The right media choice can contribute to operational efficiency, enhance yields, support environmental sustainability goals, and streamline labor and logistics. Given all that is at stake, growers are increasingly integrating growing media into their strategic business decisions.

As your cultivation strategy for 2022 gets underway, is it time to make a change in growing media? Here are some factors to evaluate:

3 S's — SOURCE, SUPPLY CHAIN, SUPPORT

Consider the source, the supply chain, and the support behind the growing media as all these factors are essential for operational efficiency. Be sure to ask:

- Where is the growing media made — North America or offshore?
- Where are support centers located?
- Can I speak to a representative, or is support delivered via the Internet?
- How stable and reliable is the supply chain?
- Are the raw materials used to make the growing media readily available?
- Can this growing media be scaled to meet operational needs?
- Is this growing media derived from sustainable and/or recycled sources?

EASE OF USE AND LABOR SAVINGS

A tight labor market and employee turnover spotlight the need for a growing media that is easy to handle. Some questions to ask include:

- Is the process of using this growing media repeatable?
- Does the growing media have features that reduce error and variability?
- How simple is it to graduate plants from one stage to the next?
- Can new employees easily be trained on how to use the growing media?
- How does the growing media improve operational efficiency?

Learn why cultivators are choosing VidaWool™ growing media to meet the growing demands of their operations. Designed for consistency, precision, and repeatability, and backed by science, VidaWool™ lets you cultivate with confidence.



PRECISION PLANT PERFORMANCE

As every cultivator's business is unique, growing media should be able to manage nuances such as water and nutrient distribution, placement, and UV exposure. Some questions to ask include:

- Does this growing media support even distribution of water and nutrients?
- Can inputs be modified to optimize plant steerability?
- How does the growing media facilitate precise plant placement for even spacing?
- How vulnerable is this growing media to threats like pooling water, UV exposure, mold/mildew growth, pests, and disease?
- Has the cultivation performance of this growing media been vetted by third-party research and experts?

See table below for a quick comparison guide of growing media to weigh the advantages of your options.

HORTICULTURE GROWING MEDIA COMPARISON

	COCO COIR	SOIL POTTING MIX	VIDAWOOL™ MINERAL WOOL
WATER AND NUTRIENT DISPERSION	** + Loose structure promotes root growth and water/nutrient uptake - May require mixing with other materials to optimize drainage/nutrients	* + Naturally nutrient-rich - Nutrients may be supplied slowly over time, requiring amendments	*** + Designed with Hydro-Xtend™ water dispersion technology + Offers even water dispersion and nutrient availability + Provides predictable water retention
LABOR SAVINGS	** + pH neutral - May need to be pre-rinsed to reduce salt content	* - Usually requires custom mixing	*** + Designed to work as a system for easy transplantation from stage to stage + No material mixing required - Must be conditioned to proper pH before use
REPEATABILITY/ERROR REDUCTION	* - Loose material requires care in transplanting	* - Mix content itself may vary - No pre-set planting guides	*** + Pre-drilled holes and pre-cut plant guides reduce guesswork
EFFICIENT WATER USE	** + Excellent wettability - Decomposes during growing, affecting water retention	* - Mixes can be hydrophobic	*** + Hydro-Xtend™ water dispersion technology prevents formation of dry zones + Tight wrapping prevents pooling away from plant
PLANT STEERABILITY	* - Additional nutrients may be required	** + Highly customizable - May require many inputs	*** + Inert material: customizable to your growth practices
PEST/DISEASE RESISTANCE	** + Has some natural pest/disease-resistant properties - Additional chemical treatments can interfere with plant growth	* - May require use of inoculants or bio controls due to susceptibility to pathogen growth	*** + Sterile material resists growth of mold/fungus and infestation
SUSTAINABILITY OF MATERIAL	** + Derived from natural material + Reusable - Overseas production and shipping increases transportation/fuel consumption	** + Derived from natural material - Peat content can affect sustainability profile	** + Made from minimum 70% recycled content + North American manufacture and distribution reduces transportation carbon footprint - Not generally recycled or reused at end of life

+ Pros *** Most advantages
 - Cons * Least advantages