

## Soil Blocks

Soil blocks are a way to start your plants without the use of plastic pots, or the expense of purchasing peat pots (paper pots are cheap but after several weeks, tend to go very slimy and moldy, they are best used to short-term seeding only).

The soils used to make soil blocks is not the same as potting soil mixes. You can make your own using the following 'generic' recipe that you can adapt to what you have on hand (there are several variations you can find online)

- 1 part moisture retention ingredients (ex. peat moss, coir)
- 1 part drainage ingredients (perlite, coarse sand)
- 1 part compost (animal, leaf mold, mixed type back yard compost)
- Optional add nutrient ingredients like a small amount of organic balanced dry fertilizer.

Several potted soils work well as soil blocking soil without mixing (ex: ProMix Organic)

## Making Soil Blocks

1. Needed: 2 large containers, sifting device, water, soil blockers, trays for soil blocks.
2. Into a large container measure the ingredients for the soil blocking recipe. Use a bucket or measuring container of choice, mix together well.
3. Sift soil from one container into another (or if purchased, from the bag into a large container. This removes all big particles, (not a kitchen sifter, use a wire basket with ¼ inch holes, ¼ hardware cloth, etc)
4. Add enough water to thoroughly saturate the soil. (it must be very wet, when a handful is squeezed water must drip out) Allow mixture to sit 1-2 hours to soak up the water.
5. Hold the soil blocker securely and firmly press into the soil, move the blocker device around, and repeatedly scoop, press, wiggle, push against the side or bottom of the container until filled. Water should seep out of the top of the blocker when pushing if the blocker is properly filled. (this job requires muscle)
6. Scrape off the bottom of the blocks with a garden hand shovel or a spatula.
7. Hold the soil block device close to holding tray and release the blocks with the release handle, gently remove the soil blocker moving straight up.



One type of soil blocking device, wire sifting basket, and soil blocks in tray



Filling the soil blocker



Filled soil block, with bottom leveled



Release handle



Completed soil block