

RECIPE CARDS

Potting Mix Recipes

Indoor 'soil' is not soil at all; it is a blend of ingredients chosen for how they hold water and air. Mix to the plant, not the bag.

General tropical

Recipe 2 parts coco coir or peat, 1 part perlite, 1 part fine bark, handful of worm castings

For Pothos, philodendron, spider plant, peace lily, palms

Right when Water drains in a few seconds; stays springy, never sludgy

Aroid chunky

Recipe 2 parts orchid bark, 1 part coir, 1 part perlite or pumice, 1/2 part horticultural charcoal, handful of castings

For Monstera, larger philodendron, anthurium, hoya

Right when You can see air gaps; a chopstick slides in easily

Succulent & cactus

Recipe 1 part coir, 1 part pumice or perlite, 1 part coarse grit or crushed granite

For Echeveria, jade, aloe, haworthia, cacti

Right when Dries fully within days; crumbles rather than clumps when squeezed

Orchid bark

Recipe 3 parts medium orchid bark, 1 part perlite, 1/2 part charcoal; optional sphagnum on top in dry homes

For Moth orchids and other epiphytes

Right when Water pours straight through; roots stay visible and silver-green

Fern & moisture-loving

Recipe 2 parts peat or coir, 1 part fine bark, 1/2 part perlite, 1/2 part castings

For Ferns, calathea, maranta, fittonia

Right when Holds moisture like a wrung sponge; never puddles

Seed & propagation

Recipe 1 part coir, 1 part perlite or vermiculite; no fertilizer

For Cuttings, seeds, rooting

Right when Light and airy; damp, not wet; no crust forming on top

Amendments glossary: what each ingredient does in the pot, and the notes that save you a mistake.

INGREDIENT	WHAT IT DOES	NOTES
Perlite	Volcanic glass; adds air pockets, lightens mix	Floats to the top over time; rinse dust
Pumice	Porous rock; air plus some water holding	Heavier than perlite, stays put
Orchid bark	Chunks that create large air gaps; slow to break down	Pine or fir; soak before mixing
Coco coir	Renewable peat alternative; holds water, rewets easily	Buffered coir avoids salt issues
Peat	Holds water and acidity	Hydrophobic once bone dry; not renewable
Horticultural charcoal	Absorbs impurities, keeps mix 'sweet'	A little goes a long way
Worm castings	Gentle nutrients and microbes	5 to 10 percent is plenty
LECA	Baked clay balls for semi-hydro	Needs a reservoir and nutrient solution
Coarse sand	Grit for cacti; only very coarse grades	Fine sand clogs pores and does the opposite

Why? The gravel layer at the bottom of a pot does not improve drainage; water will not move from fine soil into coarse gravel until the soil above is saturated. It simply raises the wet zone closer to the roots. Use drainage holes and a well-aerated mix instead.