



# Gardening for the Future: E-Z Steps to Sustainable Gardening

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## Make your own Peat-free soil

Mix ingredients in a wheelbarrow before filling your containers. Potting soil needs a mix of coarse and fine particles to create a balanced growing environment containing enough water and air, which are essential for root growth.

Seedlings	Ornamental Plants	Edible Plants (veggies)
1 part compost	1 part compost	2 parts compost
2 parts coconut coir	1 part coconut coir	2 parts coconut coir
1 part builder's sand (sharp)	1 part good garden topsoil & 1 part builder's sand or perlite	1 part builder's sand (sharp)

*Recipes from Hennepin County, MN Master Gardener's article, accessed 11-6-2021*

Compost makes a good slow-release fertilizer. But container-grown plants, especially edibles, need more nutrients throughout the season. Good choices include: additional compost, bone meal, vermicompost (worm poo), fish emulsion and alfalfa meal.

## Peat-free options

Home compost

Leaf mold

Coconut coir (coconut husk fiber): Holds moisture well, wets more easily than peat, drains well, decomposes more slowly. Does not have sticks and possible seeds that peat has.

Pine bark, shredded bark

Perlite

Vermiculite

Sawdust

Horticultural sand (clean sand)

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## Visit a Minnesota peat bog!

Big Bog State Recreation Area in Waskish, Minnesota

60 miles NE of Bemidji. For more info:

[https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_parks/park.html?id=sra00308#homepage](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/park.html?id=sra00308#homepage)



*Options for getting rid of plastic when you garden:*

Ocean Plastic Pots, made from 100% rope and fishing net in Scotland

<https://oceanplasticpots.com/>

Ecoforms: Biodegradable pots made from renewable grain fibers (rice hulls).

<http://ecoforms.com/>

Bluestone Perennials: Online plant seller [www.bluestoneperennials.com](http://www.bluestoneperennials.com)

Proven Winners: Seed-starting compostable Eco-Pots. [www.provenwinners.com](http://www.provenwinners.com)

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## **Soil Blocks**

How-to Make Your Own Soil Blocks video (Gail Hudson)

<https://youtu.be/HeBjOSxFtc4>

### **Soil blocks recipe**

This recipe fills a paint bucket. Works best if made ahead of time and allowed to stand for several weeks before using. Need a soil block maker, mix, water and tray for the blocks.

- 3 parts coconut coir or vermiculite
- 1/16<sup>th</sup> part pulverized dolomitic lime
- 2 parts perlite
- 1/8 part dry organic all purpose plant food (the finer textured the better)
- 1 part garden soil (right out of your garden)
- 2 parts high-quality finished compost

### *Sustainable techniques and garden design:*

#### **Companion planting**

Permaculture Research Institute (search for companion planting chart.)

[permaculturenews.org](http://permaculturenews.org)

#### **Water-wise gardening & Fine fescue lawns**

University of Minnesota-Extension [www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu)

#### **Gravel Gardens**

PBS Wisconsin/"Let's Grow Stuff" Gravel gardens segment – June 22, 2022

<https://pbswisconsin.org/watch/lets-grow-stuff/gravel-gardens-n1vj1y/>

Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison, Wisconsin [www.olbrich.org](http://www.olbrich.org)

#### **Eco-friendly nurseries**

Prairie Moon Nursery—Online vendor ships dormant, bare-root, native perennial plants.

(They do use peat to pack their plants.) [www.prairiemoon.com/plants/bare-root/](http://www.prairiemoon.com/plants/bare-root/)

**Book:** *Drought-resistant planting: Lessons from Beth Chatto's Gravel Garden* 2016