

TGHS: Martin's Recommendations on Coir, Depletion and Replenishment

Coir is an organic product and will decompose over time. If you have used Peatmoss in the past, you would have experienced the same problem.

After about 2 years it is time to try and replenish. I have not found any guidelines on how to go about this for either Coir or Peatmoss.

Therefore, I can only give you what I personally do.

Perennials

Digging these up and replanting them with added Coir is not what you want to do, unless you are subdividing your plant. In this case I do add a mixture of 1/3 each of garden soil, compost and Coir. Some of you prefer to use Triple Mix instead of garden soil, or black earth.

For permanent perennials I remove the mulch, loosen the top layer of the soil and then rake in some Coir. After this I put the mulch back. The mulch will prevent the sun and wind from drying out your soil. The added Coir will retain the water in the soil, provide some aeration, and keep the soil loose.

Potted Plants

At this time of year, we are looking at indoor plants. When it is time to repot these, take the plant out of the pot, loosen the soil and the roots.

When putting the plant back, add some of your preferred medium and add some Coir for extra water retention. For new indoor potting I use potting mix and add about 1/5 th of Coir. You do not need to add very much since regular potting mix already has a fair bit of moisture-retention mediums added.

Coir Benefits

The main benefit of Coir is its ability to retain moisture, which in the outdoors is critical in our hot summer months, and for indoors where we often have very low moisture in our air.

Coir is a replenishable resource. It is the outer husk of the coconut and a by-product when coconuts are harvested for consumption or further processing. Peatmoss is also a replenishable resource, but it takes centuries to replenish. In its natural state and environment, Peatmoss is a carbon sinkhole. In Canada we do have a great deal of Peatmoss, but we should be careful not to remove too much and deplete this great resource.

The Coir we source is from Sri Lanka, which is a country with a great deal of rainfall. It is harvested inland and washed and processed with fresh water. Some other Coir is sourced from palm trees in coastal areas where the water is brackish. Since the salt in this Coir is detrimental to our plants it has to be rinsed with fresh water to remove as much of the salt as possible, as opposed to our Coir which contains no salt to begin with.

Coir Nutrients

Coir is not a great source of nutrients for our plants. You will still need to add your usual amounts of compost, manure, or fertilizer to provide the necessary nutrients.