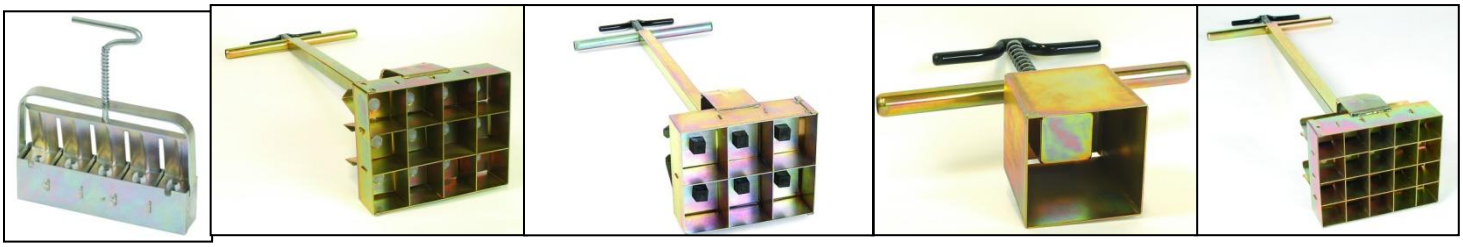
Soil Block Maker Instruction Manual

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Soil-block makers create blocks of growing medium that have been lightly compressed, so they maintain their shape without the need for plastic containers. As seedlings grow, their roots reach the edges of the soil block and are “air pruned” because of the separation between the blocks. This separation also helps increase the amount of oxygen available to the roots, which can increase vigor. This creates a substantial advantage when seedlings are transplanted into the field; reduced root disruption means they are less prone to transplant shock.



The key to making good soil blocks is to use a mix containing correct proportions of peat, compost, soil, and sand or perlite. A blocking mix needs extra fibrous material — peat — to bind the material together and help the block retain moisture. Some commercially available "peatlite" mixes may work, but are unsuitable for organic use. 512 Mix meets the organic criteria and is excellent for making professional quality soil blocks right out of the bag.



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Blocking Mix Recipe (From *The New Organic Grower* by Eliot Coleman)

A standard 10-quart bucket is the unit of measurement for the bulk ingredients. A standard cup measure is used for the supplementary ingredients. The following recipe makes approximately 2 bushels of mix.



- 3 buckets brown peat (standard peat moss).
- ½ cup lime. Mix ingredients together thoroughly.
- 2 buckets coarse sand or perlite.
- 3 cups base fertilizer (equal parts mix blood meal, colloidal phosphate, and greensand). Mix thoroughly.
- 1 bucket garden soil.
- 2 buckets well-decomposed compost. Mix all ingredients thoroughly.

Moisten the mix thoroughly using 1 part warm water for every 3 parts blocking mix. Successful soil block making depends on the mix being wet enough. The mix should have the consistency of soft putty or wet cement, so that a small amount of water oozes through small openings in the blocker as the blocks are made, and that the individual soil blocks cling to the blocker without falling out prematurely.

Using the Soil Block Maker



Blockers can be used on any flat work surface. Push the prepared soil mix into a mound that is 1¼–1½ inch deeper than the height of the soil blocker. Push the blocker into the mix until it strikes the work surface. Twist the blocker a quarter-turn and lift. Set the blocker where you plan to grow your seedlings, such as a wooden or plastic tray, push down on the handle while raising the blocker. Rinse the blocker in warm water before making the next set of blocks. Place the seed into the indentation of each block and cover according to the culture information on our seed packets. Prevent drying by covering blocks with Clear Acrylic Domes or a layer of plastic until the seeds have germinated.

Soil Block Maker Insert Set

The ¾-inch cube insert is designed to attach easily to the 4 block maker. This 4-block system makes precise depressions that allow the smaller cubes to be produced in the 20-block blocker to be “potted on” to the larger 4-block cubes. To attach the soil block maker insert, press the rubber nipple from the soil block maker with your thumb, then attach the insert.



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