

Common Questions About HydraFiber[®]

How long has HydraFiber been available on the market?

Ten years of research and trialing went into the development of HydraFiber, and the product has been sold in the market for more than seven years.

How does HydraFiber provide a more fibrous root system?

The higher air space in the soil stimulates root growth and promotes oxygen exchange with the plant. Independent research has shown that rooting performance is highly correlated with a well-oxygenated root zone, and that HydraFiber is more effective at introducing air space to substrates than perlite, without sacrificing water-holding capacity.

How much HydraFiber can be added to a soil blend?

Inclusion rates can be increased to as high as 50%. With larger container sizes, this can represent significant savings for growers!

Do different crops prefer different rates of HydraFiber in the soil?

- > To date, all crops that have been trialed have proven to grow successfully in HydraFiber at varying rates.
- > The size of the container often dictates the ratio of HydraFiber in the blend. Smaller packs are more difficult to fill at 40% or 50% inclusion.

What additional adjustments need to be made as the rate of HydraFiber is increased in the blend?

There are three points growers need to keep in mind as they work with HydraFiber:

- > Water practices should be adjusted.
- > As peat decreases, lime rates should be decreased.
- > Growers should take care to ensure they are satisfied with how the HydraFiber mix is filling pots. HydraFiber Technical Reps are available to provide consultation.

Can you grow in a mix with the same HydraFiber inclusion rate year-round, or are adjustments needed based on light levels and temperatures?

You can grow in the same HydraFiber mix year-round but you have to adjust the watering and fertilizer feed based on seasonality. Feed adjustments should be inversely correlated to the amount of water reduction. For example, if water in cool weather is reduced by 20%, then fertilizer rates should be increased by 20%. Care should be taken to ensure that the EC of the fertilizer is not too high so that crops that are salt sensitive do not get burned.

How long does HydraFiber last in the soil? Does HydraFiber add organic matter to the soil as it breaks down?

HydraFiber will last through the grow cycle, but it does break down slowly and turns into organic matter. The longer the grow period, the coarser the fiber that should be used. HydraFiber Ultra 365 and 510 are rated for 3+ years of production and should be used for long-term crops.

Does HydraFiber lead to more shrink in the container?

Depending on the rate of fill there can be some settling. Over-filling before compacting will help counteract this effect and ensure no voids.

What happens if you grow plants in 100% HydraFiber?

Plants can be successfully grown in 100% HydraFiber, but the media will react like a hydroponic media since the buffering element has been removed. While it is possible, it can be challenging for irrigation, fertility and container filling.

Does less watering mean that feed rates should be increased? If so, by how much?

- > Typically, we recommend that growers match the physical properties of their outgoing growing media with their new HydraFiber mix as closely as possible. However, it is impossible to match perfectly. Most growers report that despite small differences in water-holding capacity of the substrate, a change in fertilizer is usually not required.
- > However, if you find that you are using a significantly lower amount of water, it is important to increase your Nitrogen concentration by an amount that correlates to the water reduction made. For example, if you have determined you are irrigating 20% less, then generally the fertilizer should be increased by 20%. However, please consult with your HydraFiber representative for more specific recommendations.

What should be done if algae growth is visible on the surface of the pot?

Root cause: Algae growth indicates that the plants have been overwatered and watering should be reduced. Once the plant canopy covers the soil surface this concern typically goes away. However, in severe situations, algae formation can create a crust on the surface of the media which can inhibit water movement into the substrate. Suggestions are as follows:

- > Algae is best treated preventatively. Water management can be a challenge for many growers, particularly when switching to a new growing media. Make sure growing staff are aware of 'surface drying' properties of mixes with HydraFiber and recognize proper watering practices. Sometimes this can be difficult/impossible in certain situations (i.e., direct stick programs where high moisture is required early on).
- > Chemical control might be the best choice. There are a variety of products available that work well. Most of our customers report having tremendous success with Uptake/ KleenGrow, but results are highly dependent on timing, as the product is most effective as a preventative.

HydraFiber is consistent, reliable, domestic and sustainable. Contact us today at 800-496-0955 or hydrafiber@profileproducts.com for more information.



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