

JANUARY 2019

ROOTED

The HydraFiber® Advantage: Grow great plants...without the media headaches.



Maximize Your Margins

MAKE YOUR MEDIA PROGRAM WORK HARDER IN 2019 WITH HYDRAFIBER

A photograph of three people (two men and one woman) in a greenhouse, kneeling and examining plants. The greenhouse has a high ceiling with yellow support structures and many plants hanging from the ceiling. The people are dressed in casual work clothes. The man on the left is wearing a red shirt, the man in the middle is wearing a dark shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a blue shirt and a dark vest. They are all looking at a plant that the woman is holding.

IF YOU'RE NOT CHANGING, YOU'RE NOT GROWING.

"IF YOU ALWAYS DO WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS DONE,
YOU'LL ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS GOT."
HENRY FORD'S WORDS ARE SO TRUE! I FIRMLY
BELIEVE THAT SUCCESS – BOTH BUSINESS AND
PERSONAL – IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO WILLINGNESS
TO EMBRACE CHANGE AND MOVE BEYOND
"WHAT WAS" TO "WHAT CAN BE".

The HydraFiber team is proud to partner with growers across North America to be pioneers of change in horticulture. They're trialing our Advanced Substrate, seeing proven results on their own crops and evolving to HydraFiber, whether they mix their own media or buy pre-mixes. Each is seeing better margins, whether it's from improved root development and overall plant quality, inventory management, shelf life, efficiency or environmental benefits.

This issue offers several exciting opportunities to build your business, including the latest findings on growing perennials in HydraFiber mixes and a look into the new HydraFiber Expander processing unit – the right-sized machine for even the lowest capacity needs. We look forward to partnering with you to open new doors that will keep you ROOTED in success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer B. Broersma-Neujahr".

JENNIFER B. BROERSMA-NEUJAHR
DIRECTOR –
HORTICULTURE BUSINESS

HEARTLAND GROWERS' NICK GAPINSKI (LEFT) AND **RIC STEVENS** SHOWED OFF THE IMPROVED ROOT QUALITY ON THEIR GERANIUM CROP TO ME ON A RECENT VISIT. HEARTLAND TRIALED HYDRAFIBER FOR OVER A YEAR AND GOT COMFORTABLE WITH OUR PRODUCT. AFTER SEEING THE RESULTS, THEY SAY IT WAS AN EASY DECISION TO MAKE THE SWITCH TO HYDRAFIBER.



It's All In the Details

NATHAN CARNEY,

HYDRAFIBER'S TECHNICAL SPECIALIST, MAKES SURE THAT GROWERS SUCCEED WITH BOTH THEIR CROP CULTURE AND EQUIPMENT.

1. You've been on the HydraFiber team since Day 1. What was the grower mindset like then as far as their growing mixes?

At the start, almost every grower said "I have a substrate that works for me and I don't want to change." Sure, their mixes worked...but you don't know there's something better out there until you meet it and check it out right in your own greenhouses.

2. Fast forward a few years...what are you seeing now?

While there will always be some hesitation to change for every grower, today HydraFiber is a

powerful name in the marketplace. In just these few years, it has become the go-to raw material in media programs, because it's proven itself time after time to make mixes work harder.

3. You cover both the cultural and technical sides of HydraFiber. Talk about what is happening in production.

Currently there are close to 100 different "farms" using HydraFiber in everyday production and all of them have great, very smart growers. In our on-site visits, we learn so much from them but also get a lot of questions. We go back to our in-house lab and greenhouses, and work to bring them definitive data and information. Two perfect examples are Battlefield Farms and ColorPoint, who have taken our internal and university research and proven that it's possible to grow beautiful crops including poinsettias and mums in mixes containing over 50% wood fiber.

4. Say it's after-hours and a grower needs a "how to" ASAP...what then?

A great tool is our online HydraFiber HUB at www.HydraFiber.com. As soon as info becomes available, we post it there – from visual tip sheets on pot filling and water management, to machine spec sheets and so much more, you have the info in moments.

5. What's going on in equipment?

Our partnership with AgriNomix works because we both put high emphasis on technical specs and finding the right customer solutions. With 50+ HydraFiber Processing Units (HPUs) out there now, it can be challenging especially during the busiest seasons, but we team up to make sure our grower and blender customers are able to make soil when it matters most. That includes 24-hour support to troubleshoot any issues that come up.

After over a year of testing, we've just released our third processing unit – the HydraFiber Expander (HE) – which is exciting for smaller greenhouses with one to two production lines. The HE operates just like the larger HPU but at a lower cost. I can't say enough good things about the AgriNomix engineering group for making this happen!

MORE ON BATTLEFIELD'S POINSETTIA 50:50 BLEND SUCCESS STORY ON PAGE 8.

Proven on Perennials

OUR NUMBER ONE FOCUS IS TO ALWAYS BUILD 100% CONFIDENCE WITH EVERY GROWER THAT HYDRAFIBER WILL WORK FOR THEM, WHATEVER THEIR CROPS. HERE'S A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT RECENT PROVEN RESULTS ON PERENNIALS.

100% bark

80:20 bark:peat

80:20 bark:HF

70:30 bark:HF

IN THE LAB

PERENNIALS PERFORM IN HYDRAFIBER

From Day One, the Profile R&D team has committed to using trusted, third party sources to set up projects designed to help growers seamlessly and successfully transition to HydraFiber. These results help us to recommend the best formulas and offer fact-based product and cultural advice. A recent study at **AUBURN UNIVERSITY IN AUBURN, ALABAMA** compared bark-based substrates – two of which included HydraFiber 160WB – in the production of herbaceous perennials.

THE METHOD

- Four substrates were blended on a v:v basis.
- Each blend was amended with dolomitic lime, gypsum, starter fertilizer and insecticide for imported fire ant control.
- Rooted liners of Heuchera, Loropetalum and Coreopsis were planted in 1-gallon pots at 1 plant per pot.

- Heuchera was grown under a 40% shade production pad; the other crops were grown in full sun.
- All plants were grown for 343 days and watered using overhead irrigation with clear water.
- Trials were started in Summer 2017 and overwintered for one year.

THE FINDINGS

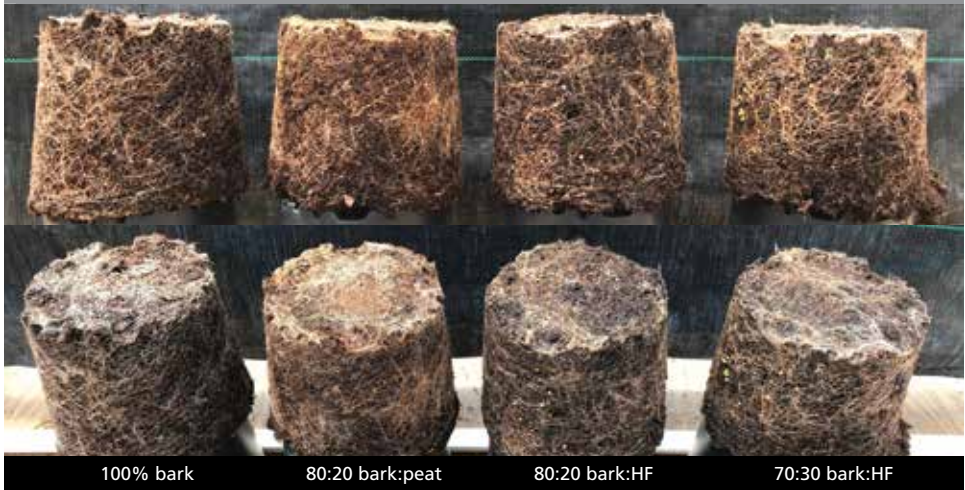
- Overall, there were no visual differences between plants grown in the different mixes.
- Shoot dry weight (g) for Loropetalum and Coreopsis was not significantly different.
- Although there were significant differences in Heuchera shoot dry weight, plants were visually similar in size.
- 80:20 bark:peat and 80:20 bark:HF mixes performed statistically the same.

RESULTS OF pH AND EC OVER THE CROP CYCLE

SUBSTRATE	0 DAT		60 DAT		280 DAT		343 DAT	
	LOROPETALUM		LOROPETALUM		HEUCHERA		COREOPSIS	
	pH	EC	pH	EC	pH	EC	pH	EC
100% bark	*6.0ab	1.95ns	5.2ns	1.71ns	4.3ns	0.82ns	4.2ns	0.59ns
80:20 bark:peat	6.1a	2.26	5.3	2.05	4.9	0.76	3.9	0.70
80:20 bark:HydraFiber 160WB	5.8b	2.66	4.9	2.16	5.2	0.72	4.2	0.55
70:30 bark:HydraFiber 160WB	5.9ab	2.26	5.1	1.93	4.9	0.98	4.4	0.64
ANOVA	Pr > F						Pr > F	
Substrate	0.0205	0.0818	0.2615	0.3207	0.0765	0.4974	0.0737	0.4219

*Significant difference

Heuchera x hybrida 'Carnival Fall Festival'



- 100% bark and 70:30 bark:HF performed statistically the same.
- 80:20 bark:peat plants were larger than 100% bark and 70:30 bark:HF plants.
- Initial pH was significant and EC for all treatments was not significant.

well as in straight bark and bark:peat mix. Both the pH and EC of all mixes decreased over time. All plants overwintered well and were salable at finish. That's huge for growers who want to benefit from HydraFiber's many operational advantages just as Annuals growers do!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

The perennial crops grown in the Auburn trials using HydraFiber blends proved to grow just as

PROJECT FUNDING WAS PROVIDED BY PROFILE PRODUCTS. WE THANK **DR. GLENN B. FAIN, ANNA-MARIE MURPHY AND BRIANNA HEILSNIS OF THE AUBURN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE** FOR CONDUCTING THE PERENNIALS TRIALS.

IN THE REAL WORLD

GETTING IT RIGHT IN PERENNIALS

PAUL PILON OF PERENNIAL SOLUTIONS CONSULTING

has a passion for helping growers succeed with their crops. When he first heard of HydraFiber, he was curious about what it might offer to perennial producers. Speaking with our team, he asked about water management, fertility and porosity specific to perennials. In typical fashion, they went into our labs and came back to Paul with hard data.



Perennials are just beginning to get looked at, but from what I'm seeing, the performance in HydraFiber is comparable to other mixes."

success on crops with a two to six-month cycle. In his usual cautious style, Paul says he wants to go another cycle and see how plants hold up to overwintering – watch for his comments in a future issue.

Time and again, Paul says the growers he visits echo two points about our substrate. The consistency, bale after bale, is key and gives them confidence that the HydraFiber blend in every pot will perform the same. Equally important is the solid partnership each has formed with the HydraFiber team and their commitment to work side by side to make sure it works.

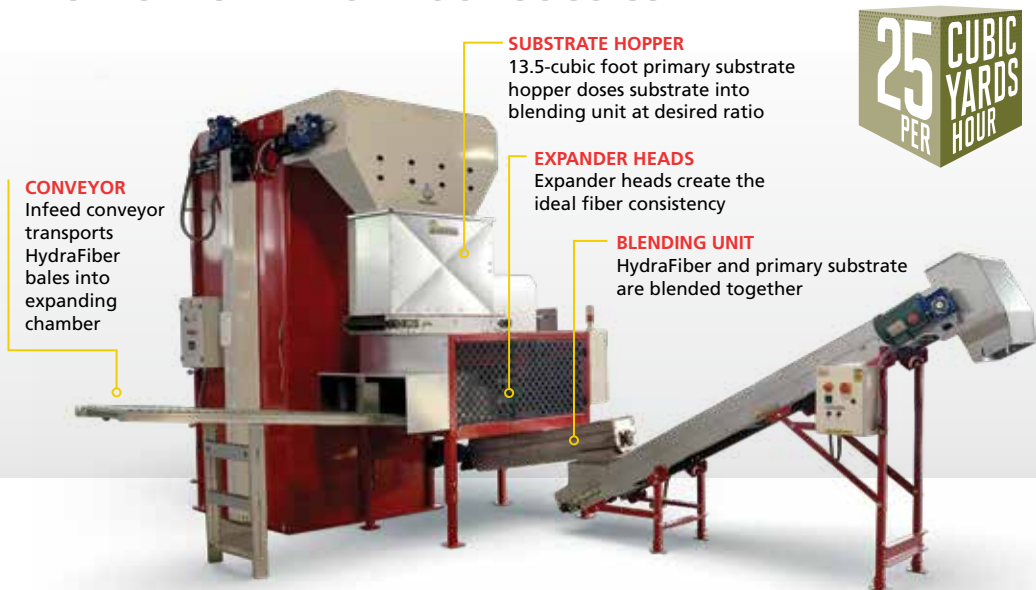


WE APPRECIATE PAUL SHARING HIS THOUGHTS ON GROWING PERENNIALS IN HYDRAFIBER.

NEW

HydraFiber Expander (HE)

IS RIGHT-SIZED FOR YOUR SUCCESS



HydraFiber comes compressed in 50-lb. bales with a 13:1 expansion rate. That's key to HydraFiber significantly reducing your shipping costs and storage space. One truckload of HydraFiber equals about 8 truckloads of perlite, 5 of peat or 2 of coir. The compact HE Unit returns bales to their fibrous state, ready to create high-quality, consistent growing media that works with every crop you grow.

SMALL FOOTPRINT MAKES THE HE IDEAL FOR GROWERS WITH 1 TO 2 PLANTING LINES

Numerous layout configurations are available.

- > Easy to self-install into most existing mix lines
- > Can be fed directly from your bale shaver or mix line
- > Adjusts easily for HydraFiber percentage based on your crops and container sizes
- > Also ideal for larger operations looking to add another machine to their smaller capacity locations
- > Delivers the same proven results as our larger HydraFiber Processing units
- > Manufactured in the U.S. by AgriNomix, the industry leader in automation; patent pending





50 Locations And Growing

The most progressive growers across North America continue to switch to HydraFiber...eliminating perlite and reducing other raw materials...all with minimal changes to their production practices. We welcome **COSTA FARMS** to the HydraFiber Family.

INTRODUCING

THE HYDRAFIBER TEAM IS GROWING! VISIT WWW.HYDRAFIBER.COM TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE REST OF OUR TEAM.



As part of the Profile Products team, I will apply my 10 years of Production Greenhouse Grower experience to nurturing plants and problem solving in a research setting."

RYAN KNAUER
HEAD GROWER –
HORTICULTURE

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Ryan oversees all of the crop production in our R&D Greenhouses in Conover, NC. Before joining us, he spent six years at Longwood Gardens as Horticultural Specialty Grower, where he managed greenhouse crews and greenhouse space devoted to stock plants, propagation and finishing; developed new displays and greenhouse techniques; and interacted with garden guests through tours, presentations and other community engagement. He has also gained experience with several leading growers around the U.S. during his career.

THE TIME IS NOW

JOIN THE EVOLUTION

HydraFiber

START YOUR HYDRAFIBER TRIAL

See proven results for yourself and jumpstart your next growing season. CALL 800-496-0955 TODAY TO DISCUSS TRIAL MATERIAL SPECIFIC TO YOUR BUSINESS.



CONNECT WITH HYDRAFIBER BLENDING PARTNERS

Not mixing your own soils? We have partnered with several leading pre-mix companies, including **BALL SEED, BERGER, GRO-BARK, OLDCASTLE** and **SUREMIX / MICHIGAN GROWER PRODUCTS.**



SIGN UP FOR THE ONLINE HYDRAFIBER HUB

The HUB is your personalized, timely and pertinent 24/7 online source for product and equipment info, production tips, research results, grower testimonials and more. CONTACT **LAURENCE PALLEZ** AT 847-353-2148 FOR YOUR PRIVATE HUB PASSWORD.



HydraFiber comes from **PROFILE PRODUCTS**, proudly offering researched and proven soil / media solutions for over 50 years.



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WWW.HYDRAFIBER.COM

“I like the root system I get from HydraFiber due to the high porosity in the mix.”



Pushing Your HydraFiber Blends

As they see the benefits HydraFiber is delivering to their margins and to their plants, growers are itching to use more. Case in point: **HEAD GROWER MARC VERDEL OF BATTLEFIELD FARMS IN RAPIDAN, VIRGINIA**, says they ran trials in 2016 with 20% and 30% HydraFiber blends on a number of key crops. When their HPU was installed in Spring 2017 they jumped to 40% for all of their young plant and finished production. Marc's team was eager to go even higher, and internal testing by our R&D team plus some in-depth university research showed them it was possible. Battlefield recently shipped out exceptional poinsettias propagated and finished in a 50% HydraFiber blend. Stay tuned and see where Marc and his crew take HydraFiber next!

ON OCTOBER 30, MARC VERDEL SHOWED OFF A GREAT-LOOKING CHRISTMAS EVE RED DIRECT-STUCK WEEK 32 INTO A 50% HYDRAFIBER BLEND. A PLEASANT SURPRISE: EVEN BEFORE HALLOWEEN, THE PLANTS LOOKED OUTSTANDING.