

# The Soil Blocker

Make soil cubes for sowing flower and vegetable seed without using pots. Transplants grown in soil blocks are either transplanted up into a larger soil block or planted into the garden. Each block will be made up with a depression in the top where the seed is sown.

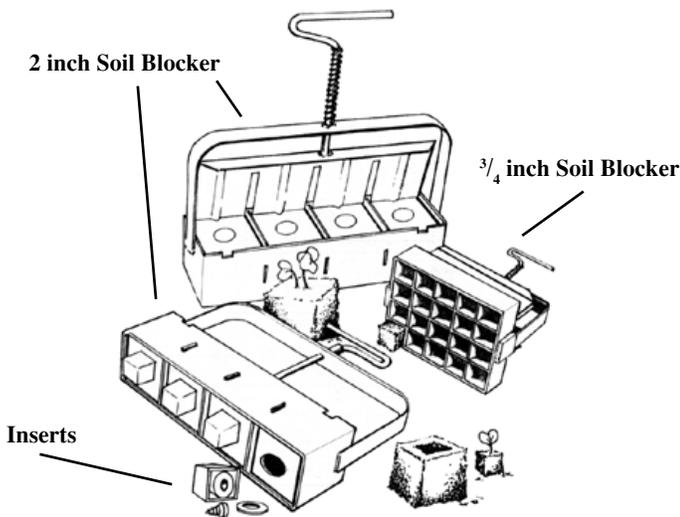
**The 4 inch Soil Blocker** makes one 4 inch cube at a time, which has an indentation on top so the 2 inch soil block can be inserted. Seed may also be sown directly into this cube. The 4 inch Soil Blocker is a great choice for late planted vegetables and flowers. It's also useful when late spring weather forces you to "up-Pot" to allow for more time before planting out into the garden or landscape.

**The 2 inch Soil Blocker** produces 4 soil blocks at a time measuring  $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$  inches. We consider this the equivalent of 2 inch pots and a great size for tomatoes, cole crops, peppers and larger-seeded flowers. Eliminates the need for using pots and you can plant the block directly into the garden with the plant is large enough. A small indentation is automatically made in the top of each block as it is formed that gives you a spot to place the seed.

If you order the optional Blocker inserts, you can attach them inside the 2 inch Soil Blocker to make a  $\frac{3}{4}$  by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch indentation. This indentation holds the smaller  $\frac{3}{4}$  by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch soil cubes produced by the  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch blocker.

**The  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch Blocker** produces twenty  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch soil cubes per operation. You can grow many smaller seed starts by growing them in the  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch Blockers cubes and then when they get large enough you can place them into the soil blocks produced by the 2 inch Soil Blocker.

**The P-2 Floor Blocker** is a professional model designed to produce twelve, 2 inch blocks at a time. It is similar to our 2 inch Soil Blocker, but makes more soil blocks at one time.



4 inch Soil Blocker and P-2 Floor Blocker not pictured

It will also accommodate the Blocker Inserts. The P-2's 31 inch long handle will let you work standing up. Built to last and for heavy production work.

**Soil Mixes:** Soil recipes vary greatly and some experimentation may be needed to develop a mix that will work well for you. In the following section we will give a general guideline for a soil mix. You may be interested in the book, *The New Organic Grower*, by Eliot Coleman. Mr. Coleman devoted 20 pages to the use of Soil Blockers.

**Soil Mix Recipe:** There is a wide variety of soil recipes for soil block use and this is a common one. The addition of lime will help to balance the acidity of the peat moss.

- 2 parts finely milled peat moss
- 1 part sand
- 1 part finely milled compost
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of ground limestone per cubic foot of mix

A small amount of Green Sand or Kelp Meal can be added to provide trace minerals and potassium. The addition of other fertilizers is not important unless the seedlings are to be held in the soil block for more than about two weeks.

**Making soil blocks:** The term "charging" is often used to refer to loading the Soil Blocker. When the soil has the right amount of water in it, you should be able to squeeze water out with your hand. Charging the blocker is achieved by repeatedly pressing it into the soil mixture. This normally takes 2 to 3 times in order to fill the chambers. Remove and excess soil by scraping the blocker along the rim or the side of the tub being used to hold your soil mix. The soil blocks should be placed about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch apart in a tray.

**Sowing Seed:** Seeds can be placed in the indentation in the top of any one of the different soil blocks and pressed into the soil lightly. You can also lay the seed in the indentation and cover with a pinch of soil. Don't forget to mark which blocks or flats contain which seed varieties.

**Watering:** Watering newly formed soil blocks may not need to occur for two or three days. A fine mist should be used to water the soil blocks because they will erode with too coarse a water flow. Once seedlings have sprouted you will be able to water occasionally from the bottom. This can be done by placing the soil blocks in a nursery flat with drainage holes. Then place this flat into a flat without drainage holes and containing water to allow the water to soak into the soil blocks from the bottom. Some top watering may be needed to be continued to keep the soil blocks evenly moist. When the seeds are starting to sprout or the weather is warm, two or three waterings per day may be needed.

**Feeding:** If the seedlings are to be kept in soil blocks for more than two weeks, feeding with a water soluble fertilizer would be advised.

**Planting:** Once roots have begun to appear, the soil blocks may be transplanted into the garden or smaller soil blocks may be inserted into a larger size soil block for further growth.

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