

# Seedling mix recipes

I have listed a series of seedling mixes below that will, with the addition of fertiliser, make good potting mixes for young plants. Note that this information is intended as a guide only, as each area and climatic zone varies and each grower will have his or her own "favourite" medium.

## BULB MIXES

Crocks must be placed in the bottom of each container for all bulbs.

### Summer rainfall

- For species that are easy to propagate:  
2 parts river or industrial sand : 1 part compost
- For species that are difficult to propagate:  
3 parts river sand : 1 part compost
- For species that are really difficult to propagate:  
equal parts of washed river sand and industrial sand—leave the compost out altogether.

### Winter rainfall

- For species that are easy to propagate:  
2 parts washed river sand or industrial sand : 1 part loam soil : 1 part fine compost
- For species that are difficult to propagate:  
1 part washed river sand : 1 part compost
- For species that are really difficult to propagate:  
3 parts sand : 1 part compost

### Fleshy rooted bulbs

(such as *Clivia* and *Agapanthus*)

- Use a well-drained, humus-rich medium with some river sand to give a bit of bulk.
- 4 parts milled bark : 1 part of sand

## CARNIVOROUS PLANTS

The best growing medium for *Drosera* and Terrestrial Bladderworts is:

- 2 parts peat : 1 part coarse river sand

## CYCADS

The most suitable medium for germinating cycad seed is one that is coarse and that will allow drainage yet be able to retain adequate moisture for germination. The sand should be washed and, as sand has a tendency to dry out, milled pine bark, peat, or compost must be added in.

- The ratio is 2 parts sand : 1 part milled pine bark, peat, or compost

## DISAS

- 1 part finely chopped palm fibre : 9 parts sand
- or New Zealand Sphagnum moss on its own
- or 1 part filtered fine grade silica sand (found in the south-western Cape) : 1 part medium grade silica sand placed in a 15 cm pot (as recommended by Wodrich)

### Summer rainfall areas

Use river sand that is granite or sandstone based. Place a layer of New Zealand Sphagnum moss on the top of the pot to prevent algae from growing on the medium (Wodrich, 1997: 60–66).

## FYNBOS

### Potting mix with soil

- 8 parts bark : 8 parts sand : 4 parts loam : 1 part fern fibre with 500 g ammonium sulphate fertiliser per cube of mix

### Potting mix without soil

- 2 parts bark milled : 1 part fern fibre, add 1,5 kg of low-phosphate 7:1:2 (27) per cubic metre of mix

## ERICAS, PROTEAS, AND BUCHU—CUTTING MIX

- 1 part milled pine bark : 1 part polystyrene balls

## PROTEAS—POTTING MIX

- 2 parts sand : 1 part leaf mould or compost : 1 part loam

## FERNS

Use soil rich in organic matter for spores.

- 1 part sphagnum or well-sieved leaf mould : 2 parts coarse sand

## PELARGONIUMS

- 1 part loam : 2 parts sand : 2 parts compost

## PLECTRANTHUS

- 1 sand : 1 loam : 2 parts compost

## RESTIO SEEDS AND PLANTS IN CONTAINERS

- 2 parts milled pine bark or compost : 1 part loam : 2 parts industrial sand or coarse river sand

## STENOGLOTTIS

Remember that drainage properties are essential!

- 6 parts medium river sand : 2 parts compost : 1 part peat moss or fern fibre or palm fibre
- or 5 litres of shredded bark (usually our pine compost) : 2–3 cups of medium river sand

Some growers add polystyrene granules or rock wool to help bulk up and open the mixture for good aeration (Wodrich, 1997: 95–98).

## SUCCULENTS

- 6 parts sand : 2 parts soil loam : 1 part leaf mould or compost in the soil mix. Add about 1 kg of lime to one cubic metre of soil mix.
- For succulent bulbs, use a 1 part commercial bark, usually consisting of pine bark (about 2–5 mm in size) : 1 part coarse river sand. A bit of soil can be added when the seedlings are ready to be transplanted.



# Suppliers

The suppliers listed below have been very helpful to me. I do not endorse individual products. This list is purely South African and does not cover other member countries, which, I am sure, have their own lists of suppliers. However, with the help of the Internet, readers will find useful information on the websites listed. Large suppliers would probably be able to provide a name of a local source in the country where you are resident.

## AGRICULTURAL DISINFECTANT OR PLANT SANITISERS

Bac 20  
Jeyes Fluid  
Sporekill  
Physan

## CHEMICAL SUPPLIERS

**Hydrotech:**  
[www.icaonline.co.za](http://www.icaonline.co.za)  
**Efecto:**  
[www.efekto.co.za](http://www.efekto.co.za)  
**Bayer:**  
[www.bayergarden.co.za](http://www.bayergarden.co.za)  
**Syngenta:**  
[www.syngenta.co.za](http://www.syngenta.co.za)  
**Du Pont:**  
[www.dupont.com](http://www.dupont.com)

## FIBRE GROWING BAGS

**Balexco:**  
Cape Town: 083 4564971

## GENERAL HORTICULTURAL DEALERS

**Greenfingers** in Port Elizabeth  
**Sandscape** South Western Cape:  
021 931 4268—Frank Behr  
**Grovida:**  
KwaZulu-Natal Branch:  
031 205 2872—Vincent Lourenco  
[grovida@global.co.za](mailto:grovida@global.co.za)  
Gauteng Branch:  
011 613 2710—Johan du Plooy  
[voorspoed@mweb.co.za](mailto:voorspoed@mweb.co.za)

## GRAFTING TAPE

**Plastrip:**  
011 452 4660—Gavin Vorster  
[plastrip@mweb.co.za](mailto:plastrip@mweb.co.za)  
**Mike McDonald:**  
033 342 2194  
[www.mcdonaldsgardenshop.co.za](http://www.mcdonaldsgardenshop.co.za)  
[macdonalds@futurenet.co.za](mailto:macdonalds@futurenet.co.za)

## SMOKE TREATMENT

Kirstenbosch Instant Smoke Plus Seed Primer  
Botanical Society Shop  
Kirstenbosch  
Cape Town

## WATER HARVESTING

[www.rainwaterharvesting.com](http://www.rainwaterharvesting.com)

## WATER-STORING GELS

Listed are three of the more commonly available brands in South Africa. Get hold of your local horticultural dealer to recommend a brand name.  
Terrasorb  
Hygrosorb  
Stockosorb

