

Australian Standard™

**Potting mixes**

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This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee CS-037, Garden Soils and Potting Mixes. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 4 August 2003 and published on 5 September 2003.

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Australian Institute of Horticulture  
Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated  
Certification Bodies (Australia)  
NSW Agriculture  
NSW Department of Public Works and Services  
Nursery & Garden Industry Australia  
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Australian Standard™

## Potting mixes

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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee CS-037, Garden Soils and Potting Mixes to supersede AS 3743—1996, *Potting mixes*. The Standard was originally requested by the Australian Institute of Horticulture and the Division of Soils, CSIRO.

This edition incorporates AS 3743—1996 Amendment 1—1998. Other changes comprise refinements which take into account results of further experience in the determination of air filled porosity (Appendices B and H) nutrients (Appendices D and G) and the toxicity test (Appendix F). Marking has changed to include bold line bordering around the health warnings for prominence on the bag.

The terms 'normative' and 'informative' have been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which they apply. A 'normative' appendix is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

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## FOREWORD

Long-term storage of potting mix, especially in warm, moist environments, can lead to depletion of the available nitrogen content of the mix. The concentration of nitrogen that is available to plants at potting will be decreased from what it was at manufacture. Marking requirements and the note in Clause 2.5.1(c) relate to this problem. A 'best-before' date was discussed by the Committee, but was not considered to be the total answer, as retailers would not necessarily see any advantage in rotating mixes in the store, nor consumers any problem in using a mix after the date. Consumers do not generally understand this situation and would need to be educated to understand the fact that fertilizer may need to be added even to a premium mix that has been stored for some time.

In view of this, and in order to increase the likelihood that plants will still have sufficient nutrients to produce plant growth for at least the short term after sale of the potting mix, it is suggested that potting mix ingredients should have an NDI (see Appendix E) of at least 0.6 at the time of their incorporation into a standard potting mix.

## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

### Australian Standard Potting mixes

#### SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL

##### 1.1 SCOPE

This Standard specifies physical, chemical, biological and labelling requirements for potting mixes packaged for retail sale. Potting mixes of both regular and premium quality are covered. Requirements are also included for mixes labelled as suitable for African violets, bulbs, hanging baskets, seedlings, orchids, acid-loving plants and plants that are sensitive to phosphorus.

Test methods for the analysis of potting mixes are set out in Appendices A to H.

NOTE: Appendix I gives guidance on the determination of compliance with this Standard.

##### 1.2 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Standard is to provide manufacturers, educational institutions, consumers and growers with a set of requirements which will ensure that potting mixes can germinate seeds, grow seedlings, strike cuttings and maintain plant growth.

##### 1.3 APPLICATION

All potting mixes shall comply with Section 2 of this Standard and specifically with the applicable requirements in Table 2.1. Requirements shown in the table apply at the time of testing.

##### 1.4 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

The following documents are referred to in this Standard:

AS	
1199	Sampling procedures and tables for inspection by attributes
1199.0	Part 0: Introduction to the ISO 2859 attribute sampling system
1199.1	Part 1: Sampling schemes indexed by acceptance quality limit (AGL) for lot-by-lot inspection
AS/NZS	
1336	Recommended practices for occupational eye protection
1715	Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective devices
1716	Respiratory protective devices
2161	Occupational protective gloves
2161.2	Part 2: General requirements
ISO 9001	Quality management systems—Requirements
ISO 9004	Quality management systems—Guidelines for performance improvements
HB 18	Guidelines for third-party certification and accreditation
HB 18.28	Guide 28—General rules for a model third-party certification system for products