

RISESUBSTRATES—GUIDE 1 OF 2 | COMING FROM PEAT MOSS

Leaving Peat Moss? Go at Your Own Pace.

You don't have to decide anything today. This guide just shows you, plainly, what actually changes if and when you do — with real numbers, from real greenhouses.

No pressure. No deadline. Read it whenever you have ten minutes.

ONE NUMBER, BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

58%

Less water used by a commercial rose greenhouse in Naivasha, Kenya, after moving its growing system onto cocopeat — with equal or better stem growth, measured over a full year.

*Ketter, Kariuki, Wesonga, Elings & Hoogerwerf,
International Society for Horticultural Science, 2015.*

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Real Greenhouses, Real Numbers



You shouldn't have to take a supplier's word for it. Here is what independent research and trade press have actually recorded.

NAIVASHA, KENYA — COMMERCIAL ROSE FARM

A cocopeat-based growing system used 58% less water than the farm's soil-based system — a difference of roughly 1,197 litres per square metre over the study period — while producing equal or better stem length and noticeably higher leaf chlorophyll.

Ketter et al., "Evaluation of a cocopeat-based substrate system for rose production in Naivasha, Kenya," ISHS, 2015.

THE NETHERLANDS — COMMERCIAL PEPPER GROWER

"More forgiving, with a better balance between vegetative and generative growth" — a Dutch pepper grower's own words after his first crop on coco substrate. He reordered coco for the next planting.

Reported in HortiDaily, "NL: Making a leap into a substrate switch," August 2026.

UNITED KINGDOM — INDUSTRY-WIDE DIRECTION

From January 2026, every Royal Horticultural Society retail outlet sells only plants grown with "no new peat." It's the clearest signal yet of where UK and EU horticulture is heading — on a timeline growers can plan around, not panic about.

Royal Horticultural Society, retail peat-free policy, effective January 2026.

WHY THIS PAGE MATTERS

None of these growers switched everything overnight. The Dutch pepper grower above was on his first crop. The point isn't that the decision was instant — it's that it was informed, gradual, and worked.

What Actually Changes

Peat moss and coco peat are more alike than different. Here is the short, honest list of what's genuinely not the same.

STARTING ACIDITY

Peat moss: pH 3.5–4.5 — needs liming before you can plant into it

→ Coco peat: pH 5.5–6.8
close to ready, no liming step

WHEN IT DRIES OUT

Peat moss can turn water-repellent once fully dry — hard to rewet evenly

→ Coco peat soaks back up quickly, even from bone dry

HOW LONG ONE BATCH LASTS

Peat moss typically breaks down and loses structure within one season

→ Coco peat commonly holds its structure for 2–3 seasons

HOW FAST A CORRECTION SHOWS UP

Peat moss buffers changes — a fix can take days to reach the roots

→ Coco peat usually responds within 1–2 waterings

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END

Extracted from a peat bog — a finite resource, increasingly restricted in the EU/UK

→ A coconut processing by-product — renewable, fully compostable after use

WHAT STAYS EXACTLY THE SAME

Your irrigation timing logic, your general EC/pH monitoring habit, and the fact that you're working with a living, biologically active substrate — not switching to something sterile and unfamiliar.

Blends That Match or Beat

Coco peat isn't one substrate. Rise Substrates blends the pith-to-chip ratio specifically to out-perform peat moss where it matters most: air reaching the roots.

50/50 PITH-CHIP — THE PEAT MOSS EQUIVALENT

The closest match to standard peat moss on moisture feel and handling — but with meaningfully more air-filled porosity, which is the single biggest reason root-rot risk drops after a switch.

30–35%

AIR-FILLED POROSITY

55–60%

WATER-HOLDING CAPACITY

70/30 PITH-CHIP — FOR LONG-SEASON CROPS

Holds structure across a longer crop cycle without compacting the way straight peat does by mid-season — the standard choice for tomato and rose growers running 10+ month cycles.

25–30%

AIR-FILLED POROSITY

60–65%

WATER-HOLDING CAPACITY

30/70 PITH-CHIP — MAXIMUM DRAINAGE

Built for crops that punish standing water — berries above all. Where peat moss typically sits at 10–20% air-filled porosity, this blend roughly doubles it.

32–38%

AIR-FILLED POROSITY

50–55%

WATER-HOLDING CAPACITY

Strawberry greenhouse tabletop system

Berry crops in particular benefit from coco peat's higher air-filled porosity versus peat moss.



You Can Go This Slowly

Nothing in this guide asks you to convert anything today. Here's the lowrisk way growers actually do this.

- 1 Try one row, one bench, or one block**
Keep the rest of your crop exactly as it is, on peat moss, with nothing at risk. Match the new substrate's feed EC/pH to what you already run.
- 2 Watch it for one full cycle**
Compare root development, canopy vigour, and runoff stability against your main crop. Coco peat responds fast, so you'll see the answer within weeks, not months.
- 3 Decide only then**
If it's not better for you, you've lost nothing — you're still on peat moss everywhere else. If it is, expand a little at a time, on your own schedule.

STAYING ON PEAT MOSS IS A COMPLETELY REASONABLE CHOICE, FOR NOW

It works. It's familiar. The only thing worth knowing is that the ground is shifting under it — EU and UK retail and regulatory pressure on peat is real and dated (page 3) — so when you do look into alternatives, it's worth doing it on your own timeline, rather than under pressure later.





IF YOU WANT TO TALK IT THROUGH

We Help Growers Work This Out.

Tell us your crop, climate, and current substrate. We'll tell you honestly whether a trial block makes sense for you — and if it doesn't yet, we'll say so.

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Also available: the crop-specific Rise Substrates guides (Tomato, Strawberry, Cucumber, Blueberry, Roses & more),
and Guide 2 of this series — *Coming From Rockwool*.