



COMPOSTS

J Arthur Bower's offer the gardener a wide choice of quality specialist peat-reduced, peat-free and loam-based composts with specially selected balanced nutrients to encourage excellent seed germination and quality plant growth, all year round.

SOWING INDOORS

General Tips on Seed Sowing

Seeds and young seedlings are very susceptible to disease and pests. It is vital, therefore to make sure that all equipment such as seed trays, pots and watering cans are clean, and where possible, sterile. Greenhouses, and cold frames should be thoroughly cleaned and last year's debris removed.

Do not water seeds or seedlings with rainwater as this may contain the organisms that cause damping-off.

When using a seed and potting compost it is advisable to use new compost, as old compost may have become contaminated or have dried out.

Preparing the Seed Trays

Always use a proprietary seed compost such as J Arthur Bower's Seed & Cutting Compost. Perlite and/or Vermiculite can be added to make your own mixture.

Fill your seed trays/pots to within ½" of the top. Gently tap the tray on the bench to settle the compost. Water well using a fine rose and leave to drain. The compost will not require any further firming. If preferred watering can be done by standing tray in water.

Sowing

Seeds vary in size. Sweet corn seed is large enough to handle individually but lobelia seeds are very fine and may require to be mixed with fine dry sand to help distribute them evenly over the compost. Always sow thinly to prevent overcrowding and damage. Seed will keep if stored carefully.

Larger seeds should be lightly covered with more compost. As a general rule, seeds should be covered with compost to the depth of the seed. If you prefer you can use Vermiculite. Some seeds need light to germinate – check on the packet.

Propagation

For germination, seeds require warmth, water and air with little or no light. After sowing the trays should be covered with glass to retain moisture and polystyrene sheets or paper to keep out the light and placed in a warm spot.

Seeds sown between January - February will require some additional warmth, either in a heated greenhouse or in an airing cupboard. March and April sowing still require some warmth but it may not be necessary to use additional heat if the weather is mild. Always check the instructions on the packet.

As soon as germination takes place remove the coverings and place the tray in a light spot avoiding direct sunlight, to grow on. Keep the compost moist at all times, but not soggy.

Pricking Out

As a general rule the young seedlings are ready for pricking out when they are large enough to handle. When removing the young plant, always pick them up by their leaves and not by their stems. Place in prepared trays or in some cases in 3½" pots. Again the packet instructions will give precise details. Allow to grow on until they are almost ready for transplanting.

Hardening Off

Plants that are grown outdoors require to be "hardened off" i.e. allowed to adjust to the lower temperatures outside. If your greenhouse is not being used for other sowings, use it for hardening-off by ventilating it as much as possible. Otherwise use a cold frame. In both cases protect the young plants from frost.

SOWING OUTDOORS

Preparing the Seed Bed

Many flowers such as perennials and some bedding varieties are sown directly into the growing site. Most vegetable seeds are initially sown indoors or in a seed bed before transplanting out in the growing site.

The seed bed should be dug over during Autumn or Winter with the addition of any from the range of soil conditioning products, e.g. J Arthur Bower's Farm Manure, J Arthur Bower's Mulch and Mix, J Arthur Bower's Organic Garden Compost. It will then require a final turning in the Spring plus a light application of J Arthur Bower's Growmore Granular plant food or J Arthur Bower's Superphosphate 10-14 days prior to sowing.

The objective in preparing a seed bed is to create a fine tilth i.e. with no lumps or uneven patches. After the final digging, the bed should be firmed, ideally using a board and treading down on it to give a good, crumbly surface.

Sowing

There are several ways to sow seed in a seed bed. They can be sown thinly in drills or broadcasted over a given area. Sowing in drills enables you to identify your seeds and to remove weed seedlings.

Water-in well using a fine rose, and continue to keep the site moist at all times, but do not over water. Cover with fleece or netting to protect from pigeons/mice etc.

Thinning Out

As the seeds germinate, allow them to grow on until they are large enough to handle. Remove the excess number of seedlings, taking care not to damage the ones that are to

remain. Leave to grow on and, if necessary, thin out again until the remaining plants have sufficient room to grow to maturity.

It is advisable when thinning out, to take the weakest of the seedlings, leaving the healthiest and sturdiest to grow on.

Transplanting

As a general rule, seedlings need gentle handling during transplanting. The roots are very delicate and any damage could cause the plant to die or grow incorrectly.

Where possible, always use a dibber and ease in the roots. Press the soil firmly but gently around the base of the plants and water in well.

PEAT-REDUCED COMPOSTS TO USE FOR SEED SOWING AND POTTING

All our peat-reduced composts are based on a blend of peat, bark fines and composted green material to ensure peak performance. The multi-purpose compost contains some coarse material to prevent compaction and waterlogging.

J Arthur Bower's Seed and Cutting Compost

- ◆ Peat-reduced mix with sharp sand plus nutrients and trace elements.

Used for:

- ◆ Seed sowing, cuttings, pricking out and potting.
- ◆ Used for indoor and outdoor plants.
- ◆ Bag sizes: 60L, 35L and 10L.

J Arthur Bower's Multi-Purpose Compost

- ◆ A versatile peat-reduced compost containing all essential plant nutrients plus trace elements and a unique wetting agent.

Used for:

- ◆ Seed sowing, potting, houseplants, containers and hanging baskets.
- ◆ Bag sizes: 70L, 35L, 10L & 100L bale

Compost may need to be sieved for seed-sowing. Save the coarse material and use it when filling patio pots and tubs.

J Arthur Bower's Multi-Purpose Compost with John Innes

- ◆ Formulated using peat, bark fines and added John Innes.
- ◆ Excellent water and nutrient retention
- ◆ Balanced nutrients and trace elements.

Used for:

- ◆ Seed sowing, potting-on plugs, seedlings and rooted cuttings. Also re-potting
- ◆ Feed after 4-6 weeks with J Arthur Bower's Liquid plant food.
- ◆ Bag Sizes: 60L, 25L, 15L

J Arthur Bower's Premium Multi-Plus Compost

A top quality peat-reduced compost containing Perlite, controlled-release plant food and water-storing crystals. Requires less watering and feeding than other multi-purpose composts

- ◆ For houseplants, patio pots and hanging baskets
- ◆ Contains food for 3 months
- ◆ Carry-home 35L bag

SPECIALIST COMPOSTS

J Arthur Bower's Ericaceous Compost

- ◆ Peat - reduced with sharp sand plus nutrients.
- ◆ Low pH level.
- ◆ For seedlings, cuttings and plants.
- ◆ Used for Azaleas, Camellias, Heathers, Rhododendrons and other lime-hating plants.

Bag sizes: 60L, 35L, 10L.

J Arthur Bower's Bulb Fibre

- ◆ Peat -reduced with oyster shell and wood charcoal plus nutrients.
- ◆ Maintains pH balance.
- ◆ Excellent drainage and prolonged sweetness even in containers without drainage holes.
- ◆ Suitable for indoor and outdoor bulbs.
- ◆ Bag sizes: 35L and 10L

J Arthur Bower's Cactus Compost

- ◆ Peat reduced with sand and grit plus nutrients.
- ◆ Open textured for root growth.
- ◆ For seed sowing, potting and repotting.
- ◆ Used for cacti and succulents.
- ◆ Bag size: 10L

J Arthur Bower's Houseplant Compost

- ◆ Peat reduced with Vermiculite plus nutrients.
- ◆ Includes water storing granules.
- ◆ Wetting agent, which enables the compost to be rewetted more easily.
- ◆ For foliage and flowering indoor plants (not ericaceous)
- ◆ Bag size: 10L

J Arthur Bower's African Violet Compost

- ◆ Peat reduced with Perlite plus nutrients.
- ◆ Wetting agent, which enables the compost to be rewetted more easily..
- ◆ Suitable for leaf cuttings and potting on African Violets.
- ◆ Bag size: 10L

J Arthur Bower's Orchid Compost

- ◆ Coarse Peat-reduced mix with high proportion of bark and low nutrient content.
- ◆ For most indoor orchids – check cultivation details
- ◆ Bag sizes: 10L

Tip – Always allow compost to dry out between watering

REPOTTING - Tips to get the best results

Re-pot plants before they become pot-bound. As soon as roots start to show through the bottom of the pot it's time to repot. Water the plant an hour before repotting to ensure its rootball is thoroughly moist. Choose a pot that is no more than two sizes bigger than the existing pot. It is best to repot using the same type of compost. Make sure all used pots have been thoroughly washed before re-use.

Place fresh compost in the new pot. Knock the plant out of its pot and tease out the rootball. Insert the plant so its soil is level with the rim base. Fill in with compost to within 1.5cm of the rim. Tap down to settle the compost, firm and water - do allow water to drain through before placing in drip tray.

HANGING BASKETS, TUBS AND CONTAINERS

Baskets and tubs can be planted with a wide range of flowers, grasses, ferns and foliage plants to give interest in every month of the year, even in the depths of winter.

Planting a Basket

First of all, stand the basket on a bucket for stability. Line the basket with a lining material such as damp moss, plastic sheeting or Fyba Fibre Liner. Fill the basket, tube or container with a proprietary compost such as J Arthur Bower's Tub & Basket Compost or Moisture Control Compost, stopping to insert trailing plants in the sides as you go along. Plant larger specimens at the top, leaving 1" (2.5cm) between the surface of the compost and the rim of the basket. Once the basket has been planted up, water well and leave it in the greenhouse until the plants have become established and then stand in a sheltered position for about a week to harden off before hanging up at the end of May. As a guide, 10 litres of J Arthur Bower's Compost fills a standard 12" basket.

Watering and Feeding

After the first good watering, the water-storing crystals, which are found in the Tub & Basket and Moisture Control Compost, soak up the water and swell to many times their original size. This opens out the compost as they expand; to create thousands of tiny reservoirs of water contained right where they are needed - at the roots. The polymer gradually releases its stored water to the roots as required, over an extended period of time, allowing intervals between watering to be significantly increased. Should the compost dry out a little during the hot midsummer temperatures, as it sometimes does in hanging baskets and tubs, the inclusion of a wetting agent in the Compost, enables rapid rewetting.

Dead-head your plants regularly for a long-lasting display. Feed as recommended.

J Arthur Bower's Tub and Basket Compost

- ◆ Peat based with Silvaperl Vermiculite plus nutrients.
- ◆ Includes water storing granules.
- ◆ For hanging baskets, tubs and containers.
- ◆ Feed after 6-8 weeks with J Arthur Bower's Tub & Basket Liquid Plant Food
- ◆ Use for most plants, but not lime-hating plants
- ◆ Bag sizes: 60L, 35L and 10L

J Arthur Bower's Premium Moisture Control Compost

- ◆ Reduced peat blend with added coir strands and water-storing crystals to maximise moisture retention.
- ◆ Includes control-release feed to last three months or longer. Extra feeding is optional after that time.
- ◆ For hanging baskets, tubs, pots and troughs.
- ◆ Bag size 60L

SUNDRIES TO HELP YOUR BASKET DISPLAY

If you prefer to make up your own basket compost you can buy control-release fertiliser and water-storing crystals separately. Look out for

J Arthur Bower's Plant Food Tablets

Easy to use tablets with an NPK analysis of 14-9-14
Just one application at planting time is all you need

J Arthur Bower's Water Storing Crystals

Just soak and mix with your chosen compost before planting
Available in economy tubs and easy-to-use blister packs

LOAM BASED COMPOSTS

J Arthur Bower's John Innes Composts (Seed, Nos 1, 2, 3; Ericaceous; Pots & Planters)

Loam-based composts are perfect for trees and shrubs, which often fail to flourish in soil-less mixes. Many alpine and perennials also appreciate some loam in the mix. The John Innes composts are excellent in containers as their weight means pots are less likely to be blown over.

- ◆ Based on sterilised loam plus peat, bark fines, sand and nutrients.
- ◆ Granted the John Innes Manufacturers Association Seal of Approval.
- ◆ Bag sizes: 25L, 10L

Seed - traditional mix for sowing almost all types of seed, with sufficient nutrients for early development. May also be used for rooting soft cuttings.

No. 1 - for pricking out and potting up young seedlings or rooted cuttings.

No. 2 - general potting compost for most houseplants and vegetable plants into medium sized pots, (4"-6").

No. 3 - a richer mixture for mature foliage plants and shrubs in interior planters or outdoor containers.

Ericaceous - Traditional loam-based formulation with grit sand and reduced limestone. Recommended for all lime-hating plants such as azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons.

John Innes Planters & Pots - a rich mixture with added water-storing crystals.

J Arthur Bower's Bonsai Compost

Bonsai trees have become increasingly popular over recent years. A loam-based compost is essential for the tiny root systems. Remember that even indoor bonsai appreciate some fresh air from time to time, weather permitting.

- ◆ Formulated with grit and low lime levels,
- ◆ Correct proportion of nutrients and trace elements to promote healthy growth of most bonsai subjects.
- ◆ Bag Size: 10L

J Arthur Bower's Aquatic Compost

- ◆ Formulated using sterilised loam and grit,
- ◆ Correct proportion of nutrients and trace elements to promote healthy pond plant growth, without contributing to algae growth in the water.

Used for:

- ◆ Planting all pond, bog and marginal plants including waterlilies.
- ◆ Completely harmless to pond life.
- ◆ Bag Sizes: 10L

PLANTING OUT IN THE GARDEN

When planting out, it is a good idea to mix a special compost with the planting soil. This enables the plant to establish itself to the soil in your garden, which will have a very different texture from the compost it was grown in.

J Arthur Bower's Rose Tree & Shrub Planting Compost

- ◆ Peat reduced with nutrients.
- ◆ No additional feed is needed for the first twelve months after planting.
- ◆ Mix 50% soil with 50% compost in the planting hole
- ◆ Suitable for trees, hedges, shrubs and roses.
- ◆ Bag size: 50L

GROW BAGS

Growing bags provide a convenient method of cultivation, since they retain moisture well and remove the need to dig and fertilise the soil before planting. Growing in bags also prevents plants from being infected by soil-borne diseases. They are ideal for quick maturing crops. Ensure you use fresh growing bags each season.

J Arthur Bower's Grow Bag

- ◆ Peat reduced plus nutrients.
- ◆ Use for herbs, cucumbers, peppers, strawberries and tomatoes as well as other crops.

J Arthur Bower's Planter

- ◆ Peat reduced compost plus nutrients
 - ◆ Deeper than grow bag .
- Use for herbs, salad leaves, peppers, flowers, strawberries and tomatoes as well as other crops

MOSS PEAT AND COMPOST ADDITIVES

J Arthur's Bower's Moss Peat (100 litres)

Made from 100% natural sphagnum moss peat. Can be mixed with J Arthur Bower's Silver Sand and/or Perlite to make seed and cutting composts for special plants. For carnivorous plants we recommend two parts peat, 1 part silver sand and 1 part Perlite. Do not add any feed. Also suitable for creating beds for acid-loving plants. We recommend a mixture of Moss Peat and J Arthur Bower's John Innes Ericaceous Compost

J Arthur Bower's Perlite/Vermiculite and Hydroleca

Compost additives, such as Perlite and Vermiculite enable gardeners to mix their own composts to accommodate the needs of rare and unusual plants. Perlite holds air and moisture and helps prevent compaction. It improves aeration and drainage. Vermiculite absorbs nutrients and helps insulate against temperature variations. It is invaluable for germinating difficult seeds. Hydroleca is made from expanded clay granules and can be added to compost to reduce the weight and improve drainage.

- ◆ **Further information in our companion leaflet available at the address below.**

LIQUID FOOD FOR ALL PLANTS

Most of the J Arthur Bower's composts described contain sufficient nutrients for 4-6 weeks (see detailed pack instructions for precise information). After this time you will need to give a supplementary feed. Choose from the range below for perfect results every time. All feed have child resistant safety cap and come in 1-litre and 500ml. sizes. A 500ml. bottle will make 185 litres (330 pints) of feed.

- ◆ **Multi-Purpose Liquid Plant Food: NPK 7-7-7 + T/e**
- ◆ **Tub and Basket Liquid Plant Food: NPK 4-4-8 + T/e**
- ◆ **Ericaceous Liquid Plant Food: NPK 5-4-7 + Iron**
- ◆ **Liquid Tomato Food: NPK 4-4-8 + Trace Elements**

PEAT FREE COMPOSTS

J Arthur Bower's New Horizon Multipurpose Compost

- ◆ Blend of composted bark and, timber residues with composted green material
- ◆ Totally organic nutrients
- ◆ For seed sowing, pricking out and potting on.
- ◆ Excellent in containers.
- ◆ Not suitable for lime-hating (ericaceous) plants
- ◆ Bag sizes 70L, 35L, 10L

This award-winning growing medium has consistently come out top in independent trials of peat-free composts. The coarse texture encourages healthy root growth and strong plants. Feeding should commence approximately 3/4 weeks after germination.

For fine seeds we recommend sieving to remove the coarsest material. Alternatively, use New Horizon Multi-Purpose Coir Compost

J Arthur Bower's New Horizon Grow Bag - Peat Free

The same mixture as above.

- ◆ Blend of composted bark and timber residues.
- ◆ Totally organic
- ◆ Used for herbs, cucumbers, peppers, strawberries and tomatoes as well as other crops.

New Horizon Multi-purpose Coir Compost

Made from the composted fibre stripped from coconut husks, this is a slightly coarse free-draining compost. It is particularly useful for plants that hate being soggy round the roots, such as auriculas and fibrous begonias. An excellent cutting compost.

- ◆ Fine Coco fibre plus nutrients.
- ◆ For seed sowing, cuttings, pricking out and potting.
- ◆ Used for indoor and outdoor plants.
- ◆ Bag sizes: 50L

Care should be taken not to over-water. Although the surface may appear to be dry, the remainder may still be moist.

FEEDING

New Horizon Organic Liquid Tomato Food

The feed is blended from pasteurised amino proteins derived from traditional plant extracts. It is a concentrated feed, making it easy and economical to use.

- ◆ Analysis: NPK 5-2-5
 - ◆ Certificated by HDRA (The Organic Organisation)
 - ◆ One 1-litre bottle will make up to 75 litres of feed
 - ◆ The perfect feed for new Horizon Grow Bags
- Also suitable for hanging baskets and tubs

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For further advice on any J Arthur Bower's, Garotta or New Horizon products please contact:
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