

Substrate developed from sawmill shavings

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University of Navarre scientists in Spain have developed an organic substrate from sawmill wood shavings to use for intensive crop growth in containers.

The substrate that has already been patented and marketed also has the advantage of being recyclable and more economic than other, imported ones such as peat or coconut fiber.

The researchers jointly developed the material with scientists at the Aralur company in Navarre.

When plants are grown in small containers -- as in greenhouses -- the limiting factor is the oxygen that can reach their roots; thereby, a substrate more porous than earth is needed. Normal soil encloses some 50 percent of air in its interior, while the newly developed substrate encloses 90 percent air and 10 percent solid material. That's why the substrates accelerate the growth processes of plants and provide much better results.

The product developed has the commercial name of "FIBRALUR" and is made from pine wood shavings that have been defibred by means of an industrial process. The resulting material has proved to be efficacious in growing mushrooms and other hydroponic crops and, to a lesser extent, with vegetable and forest nurseries.

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