

Horticulture - Student sheet

Investigating growing media

Seeds need a steady supply of water to germinate and get a young plant off to a healthy start. Seeds are planted in a 'growing medium', for example, soil or compost. Some growing media hold water better than others.

Problem

A nursery manager has asked: 'I'm trying to decide which growing medium to use to start seeds in my nursery. I read an article about the environmental consequences of using peat, but I've also heard peat is really good at holding water. What I want to know is: **How much water does peat hold compared with other growing media?**'

You are supposed to develop a method to investigate different growing media and will get the following material:

- growing material (5 g)
- water
- conical flask
- beaker
- filter paper
- filter funnel

As measurement plays a role within the experiment you will also be equipped with:

- scales
- graduated cylinder
- stopwatch



Plan an experiment that will show the different absorption properties of your growing media. Be careful about weight, volume and time when you plan.

Adapted from: Nuffield Practical Work for Learning: Science in the workplace

Original source: <http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/Horticulture%20-%20merged%20PDF.pdf>