

STEP 1: ROOT CONTROL

All AutoPot Watering Systems and Modules are supplied with root control. Depending on the system or module, root control may include some combination of PotSock and Root Control Disc (RCD). These are used in the following configurations:

1POT: RCD in tray (gold face up)

XL FlexiPot: PotSock on base of pot (gold face up)

EASY2GROW: RCD in pot & PotSock on base of pot (gold face up)

1POT XL: RCD in pot (gold face down)

NB: If growing aggressive plants we suggest using a RCD in the pot (gold face down) & PotSock on the base of the pot (gold face up)



STEP 2: SUBSTRATE CHOICE

A vast range of substrate options are viable with AutoPot. The following represent good examples of substrates that provide the requisite air retention and capillary action. Use quality substrates from reputable brands and ensure the mix is absorbent, light and fluffy. Ensure Clay Pebbles are pH stable or that they have been fully stabilised for at least 48hrs prior to use.



STEP 3: ADDING SUBSTRATE

For good drainage we recommend a 1" / 2.5cm layer of pH stable clay pebbles, pea gravel, Growstones or Perlite No.3 in the base of each pot.

FIRST ADD A BASE FOR DRAINAGE



If using AirDomes place the AirDome on the Root Control Disc, or Marix Disc inside the pot and carefully pour in Clay Pebbles, GrowStones, or Perlite to the height of the AirDome.

ADD SUBSTRATE UNTIL 1-2" / 2.5-5CM FROM TOP OF THE POT



Place your choice of substrates into the pot. Fill until substrate is 1-2" / 2.5-5cm below the top.

STEP 4: PLANT CHOICE

Always ensure an established plant is used when potting up. Don't place small seedlings directly into the pots. As a general rule:
easy2grow 2.2gal/8.5l - Min. plant height 6"/15cm
1Pot 3.9gal/15l - Min. plant height 9"/22.5cm
XL/FlexiPot 6.6gal/25l - Min. plant height 12"/30cm

ONLY POT UP ESTABLISHED PLANTS



Pot up and with the pot outside the tray, water each pot through. When you see water draining from the bottom of the pot, stop. Allow the pot to drain for 15 mins.

HAND WATER POTS



OUTSIDE OF TRAYS AND ALLOW TO DRAIN
 Before putting pots into trays clean the bottom and sides of each pot to help ensure the valve remains clean and free of substrate.

STEP 5: SYSTEM ACTIVATION

At this point the system SHOULD NOT be turned on, allow the plants to establish first. As a guide allow:

5-7 days for easy2grow 2.2gal/8.5L

7-12 days for 1Pot 3.9gal/15L

10-14 days for XL/FlexiPot 6.6gal/25L

DO NOT SWITCH THE WATERING SYSTEM ON INITIALLY



During the rooting phase the roots will take up the initial "through-watering" and extend to seek out further moisture. Do not water again until day 5-10 of the rooting phase.



ALLOW PLANTS TIME TO ESTABLISH IN AUTOPOT POTS

Once you're happy the plants have rooted, turn the system on. Feeling the weight of the pots will give you an idea. If heavy plenty of moisture remains to be absorbed by developing roots, if light switch on.

STEP 6: AIRDOME ACTIVATION

DO NOT SWITCH ON AIRDOMES FOR 2-3 WEEKS



If using AirDomes do not activate them straight away, allow 2-3 weeks for the plants to establish before air is blown into the root zone. Always ensure that warm air is blown into the root zone, temperatures between 18°C - 21°C are perfect. Never blow cold or hot air into the root zone.

ONLY BLOW WARM AIR - NEVER HOT OR COLD



If using air domes: place air pumps away from cold floor surfaces and, if the night temperatures in your grow space drop, use a timer to turn off the pump at night.

STEP 7: NUTRIENT CHOICES & FLUSHING

AQUAvalve5 equipped systems can be used to feed mineral or organic nutrients via the reservoir and pipework. Organic fertilisers will require a water pump in the reservoir running for 15 mins every 2 hrs and cleaning of the reservoir, pump, and filter each time the reservoir empties. If feeding this way flush pipework with plain water every time the reservoir empties. Earlier model AQUAvalves with 6mm / 1/4" pipe and fittings can be used to feed mineral nutrients on a constant basis via reservoir and pipework but not organic feeds. See Nutrient Guide for full details.

Flushing of pots is NOT necessary with food crops. With other crops flushing FROM ABOVE is NOT necessary, simply supply plain water from the reservoir to the modules for the last 10-14 days. DO NOT pour water through the top of the pots. Salt build up occurs in the top 1"/2.5cm of the substrate, where it has no detrimental effect on plant growth. Pouring water through the pot at the flushing stage may damage roots due to the toxicity of the salt build up at the top of the substrate.

ESSENTIALS

AutoPot Watering Systems are extremely versatile and can be used with the growing medium / substrate of your choice. In growing trials we have cultivated plants in a vast range of substrates from coral to denim and even pumice stone! Whatever substrate you decide to use make sure the mix is absorbent, light, fluffy and free draining. An ideal substrate for use with AutoPot is a 50% mix of perlite or clay pebbles with either soil or coco. The following guidelines and examples may provide a good basis for substrate success.

- For good drainage we recommend a 2.5cm / 1" (maximum depth) layer of pH stable clay pebbles, pea gravel, Growstones or Perlite No.3 in the base of each pot.
- Whether they are used at the bottom of the pot as additional drainage or as part of a mix, clay pebbles MUST be pH stable. Be aware that certain brands are NOT pH stable and will increase the pH of the water in the tray; this will negatively affect plant growth.
- Pay close attention to manufacturers instructions where preparation of media is concerned.
- Always use a good quality soil or coco from a reputable brand. Look for coco that has been buffered and stabilised. If unsure, pot up and pour approx 10ltrs of pH 5.6 water and ¼ strength feed through each pot - this will instantly stabilise the coco. Allow to drain thoroughly before use.
- Peat-based composts will compress if used alone, reducing the oxygen content in the root zone. Mix in perlite/clay pebbles/gravel to lighten the compost and improve aeration.

Consider that, though rich, peat can compress to virtual solidity. On the other hand Perlite will never compress. Try to create a mix that balances richness with aeration.

SUBSTRATE EXAMPLES & KEY QUALITIES

COCO / CLAY PEBBLES



Coco represents a natural, free-draining substrate that can be enhanced with beneficial bacteria and fungi to strengthen the root-zone and accelerate plant growth. The porosity and texture of the pebbles aids water retention, drainage and root-zone oxygenation.

COCO / PERLITE



Irregular, porous and rough surface textures such as those found on perlite granules provide aeration, superb water retention and also excellent drainage. Combined with the natural benefits and microbial enhancements available to coco, such mixes can give great results.

COCO / GROWSTONES



Growstones are made from recycled glass and are engineered to provide high porosity, improved aeration and better drainage of the root zone, while retaining water well. Growstones are alkaline and must be pH stabilised before use. Coco adds an active element to the mix by supporting bio-activity and, it is claimed, by delivering nutrients in synch with the plants requirements.

ROCKWOOL / CLAY PEBBLES



As it is derived from rocks Rockwool is inert and doesn't withhold or repel nutrients selectively in the way that some plant-based substrates can. Therefore it will deliver your nutrient solution in its purest form. However it will require buffering or stabilising in advance of use. Pebbles provide drainage and water retention.

SOIL / CLAY PEBBLES



Soil is an excellent medium for supporting bio-activity and soil-based substrates are available to a vast number of specifications. A complimentary medium is essential in order to provide drainage, aeration, and prevent compression in the root zone. Clay pebbles are an ideal choice.

SOIL / PERLITE



Combining any one of the huge range of soil-based grow media with perlite can produce a wonderfully diverse, active, and airy mix. Water is retained perfectly whilst still free to drain and the risk of compacting is minimised.