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## **THE USE AND CARE OF ROCKWOOL**

Rockwool is the most revolutionary soilless medium to date.

Horticultural rockwool is composed of volcanic basaltic rock and a binder which prevents potassium hydroxide and other elements from leaching into the nutrient solution. Rockwool provides from 90 to 95 percent air space between its fibers. It is capable of holding more nutrient solution and more air than any other medium. When rockwool is totally saturated it maintains an ideal air and water ratio : 80% nutrient solution, 15% air, and 5% rockwool fibers.

Because rockwool is naturally alkaline (pH around 8), it must be conditioned before it can be used. To condition rockwool cubes, fill a shallow tray with pH adjusted water of 5.5. The cubes must be saturated for 12-24 hours in this slightly acidic water to help bring the overall pH to neutral (6.3 pH). Slabs can be conditioned by installing them in your hydroponic system. Cut the sleeve only on the top where your cubes will sit. Do not cut any drainage slits on the bottom until later. Insert a drip emitter at each plant site. Fill your reservoir with 5.5 pH adjusted water and turn the pump on. Let it run until the slabs are fully soaked and bulging, then shut the pump off. Let slabs sit for 24 hours, then cut the drainage slits on the bottom of the slabs. Drain the conditioning solution from the reservoir and replace with 6.3 pH adjusted nutrient solution.

Rockwool only needs to be conditioned once. After that always pH adjust your water to a 6.3 pH.

**NOTE:** The pH of most nutrient solutions will rise for the first two weeks or so as it comes into contact with the new rockwool. Remember to check and adjust you pH daily.

**NOTE:** Never let the rockwool completely dry out as this will cause the nutrient concentration to go extremely high. This can cause your plants to experience a fertilizer burn and may even cause death.