

# Manifesto

## For the 2024 European elections

### What are growing media?

Growing media are materials other than soil in the ground in which **plants** and **mushrooms** are grown – more commonly known as **potting soil** or **substrates**.

They are used to grow a wide variety of plants including **vegetables, fruits, flowers** – and to grow **trees** in tree nurseries.

Our industry represents a



**€3 billion**

turnover creating



**11,000 jobs**

across Europe.

We are part of the horticulture industry which represents a



**€60 billion**

turnover creating



**750,000 jobs**

across Europe.

### Our ask for the next mandate

Growing Media Europe calls on EU policymakers to recognise the important role of growing media in agricultural and environmental legislation.

**Acknowledging the key role of growing media in modern horticulture**, contributing significantly to more sustainable food systems and production in Europe.

Ensuring that legislation on sustainable food production is based on **precise, stable and predictable rules** developed in cooperation with the **full agri-food value chain**.

Recognising the role of growing media in **enabling greener cities and large-scale afforestation** in Europe.

### Why are growing media important for the future of the EU?

#### SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION



Growing media are a vital part of horticulture and ensure the growing of **resource-efficient, healthy and safe food**. They are the basis of state-of-the-art growing systems in both rural and urban areas. Using fit for purpose growing media increases water use efficiency as well as reduces the need for inputs such as fertilisers and plant protection chemicals.

#### AFFORESTATION AND URBAN GREENING



High quality, fit for purpose growing media are essential for **growing trees used for afforestation and for increasing urban tree canopy cover**. Greener cities have improved air quality, help with climate mitigation and boost the mental health of EU citizens.

# Who is Growing Media Europe ?

**Growing Media Europe is the voice of the growing media and soil improvers industry.**

Our mission is to promote the interests of the growing media industry through obtaining optimum legislative conditions for the manufacturing and free trade of growing media. The association acts as an interface between the industry, the European Institutions and other stakeholders ensuring a sustainable future for the growing media sector.

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## Properties of growing media

Every component of growing media has unique properties and is mostly used in mixtures to achieve the perfectly customised end product for the consumer. A growing media producer can make thousands of mixes, tailor-made to each grower and crop.

What is most important is that each growing medium is "fit for purpose", providing optimum physical and chemical properties while ensuring the correct balance between safety to both humans and plants, cost and availability.



**Physical Properties:** Growing media need to be strong enough to support the plant while maintaining enough space for air and water. Plants need sufficient air around their roots to respire and enough water to facilitate the uptake of nutrients and allow for drainage.



**Chemical Properties:** The chemical properties of each growing medium can vary significantly and need to be suited to the individual plant being grown. For example, the pH (acidity) determines how fast and efficiently nutrients and salts are absorbed by the plant.



**Biological Properties and Safety:** It is important that growing media are free from pests as well as microbial and fungal pathogens, which could harm the growth of the plant or human health. Additionally, the presence of beneficial microorganisms can improve the growth of plants.



**Availability and Consistency:** Growing media need to be consistent both in terms of supply and quality. Each grower needs to be sure that there is a sufficient amount of growing media available at the right times, while also reliably having the same physical, chemical and biological properties.



**Sustainability and Renewability:** Every growing medium has an environmental footprint. Choosing the best growing medium for a crop allows for the efficiency of horticultural growing systems to be maximised, thus reducing environmental impacts. The biggest reductions come from looking at not just the growing media, but the whole lifecycle of plant production.