

## Customize Your Own Soil Mix

Here at Orchard Nursery we have many quality bagged soils and composts. Many of these are multi-purpose blends which can be used for a wide variety of plants and soil types. *Bumper Crop*, *Professional Potting Soil*, *Gold Rush* are all excellent general purpose products that can be used for amending, potting and mulching almost anything. But what about special needs like planting blueberries, rhododendrons, succulents or native plants?

*Azalea, Camellia and Gardenia Planting Mix* (we call it 'Acid Mix' for short) is a nice blend of fir bark, peat moss, mushroom compost, pumice and an array of organic fertilizers. Acid loving plants thrive when it is mixed half and half with the soil in the ground, but it is a bit fine-textured for planting in exclusively. A great custom mix for planting blueberries, rhododendrons, gardenias and other acid-loving plants in containers is 1/3 *Acid Mix*, 1/3 *Micro Bark*, 1/3 *Black Forest*. The bigger, coarser organic pieces in the *Micro Bark* and *Black Forest* hold plenty of moisture while still allowing plenty of air space in the soil. This is very important for healthy roots. Remember... healthy roots mean happy plants.

Our *Cactus Mix* soil has more mineral content (in the form of lava rock, sand and pumice) than our regular potting soils, giving it a gritty texture and allowing water to drain more quickly. But it is still mostly organic material (fir, redwood, and peat). Cacti and succulents actually prefer even more mineral content in their soil mix. A good custom mix for planting cacti in containers is about a 50 / 50 mix of our *Cactus Mix* and our *Volcanic Pumice* (it doesn't have to be exact). For other succulents like Echeverias and Aeoniums use about a 60 /40 mix of the *Cactus Mix* and *Volcanic Pumice*.

Note: Interestingly enough *Cactus Mix* (on its own) is the perfect soil mix to use for planting California Natives or lavenders in containers. It gives them excellent drainage, which is essential for these two types of plants.

Don't be afraid to take a good thing and make it even better by customizing your own soil mixes for special uses!