



strawberry

# Dutch Plantin Optima, the best choice for strawberry growing

## Introduction

Dutch Plantin cocopeat has been extensively tested with various vegetable crops, cut flowers, pot plants, as well as softfruits (strawberries, raspberries and blackberries) during the last two decades. The most important benefits which came to light are: fast controllability due to its excellent physical properties, faster growth due to improved rooting, minimal susceptibility to root diseases due to its organic properties, longer durability due to its stable composition and less costs by a reuse of growbags.

### The history of coir in strawberries

In the 90's there was mainly standard coir on the market: sometimes washed to a lower EC, but often not safe to use as strawberries are sensitive to Calcium deficiency. Then Dutch Plantin developed a coir especially for strawberries: a balanced and well buffered + washed cocopeat with a low EC. Growers and consultants were happy with this development as the yields improved significantly. Currently the majority of strawberry growers in Europe are provided with Dutch Plantin coir. Dutch Plantin is market leader in the production and supply of cocopeat to peatcompanies in and outside of Holland:

- bulk coir is used for crops grown in pots, troughs or gutters
- bulk coir is used for mixtures with peat moss in propagation of tray plants
- growbags (filled with loose cocopeat) are used on soil beds and tabletops

Simultaneously, a market of compressed growbags has been developed worldwide to the satisfaction of many growers. Compressed growbags are easy to handle in the fields and very light in weight.

Recently Dutch Plantin developed a compressed growbag especially made for strawberry growers. A special grade of cocochips and Dutch Plantin coir, compressed and wrapped in a strong bag. This is called Optima cocopeat. Our knowledge and experience in coir for the past 20 years and with modern production techniques resulted in this new product development.

### Controllability of Optima cocopeat

Dutch Plantin Optima Cocopeat contains an excellent air-water ratio. The Dutch Plantin Optima mixture is characterised by a high air content, even in conditions

when there is little evaporation. This avoids wet root conditions at all times and gives better opportunities to give feed so the plants keep on growing. Compared to peat or peat/coir mixtures this material dries out less quickly. In a situation of a sudden hot period in a day you can easily rewet this coir-substrate, as it will easily uptake new water. This results in a more stable production and better quality.

### Longer durability

Cocopeat as such contains lignin, cellulose and hemi-cellulose. Lignin is the most stable component out of these three. The presence of lignin in the cocopeat helps the product to remain stable and retain its positive properties for several years. This in contrast to peat (or peat mixtures), which slowly compacts, degenerates and becomes increasingly wetter. Cocopeat is ideal for re-use. Also the cocopeat is usable as soil conditioner in root-bound soil. Dutch Plantin cocopeat yields greater advantages in terms of both an ecological and financial viewpoint.

### Standard cocopeat versus Dutch Plantin Optima

When reading the physical data (see figure 1, air water ratio at pressure heights), it can be ascertained that Dutch Plantin Optima contains a higher air percentage under saturated conditions than standard cocopeat from other suppliers (see figure 1, pressure height - 3cm and 10 cm). Furthermore, the Optima's structure is more stable (shrinkage under saturated conditions is lower). All the improvements listed make opting for Dutch Plantin Optima cocopeat all the easier.



### Dutch Plantin cocopeat specifications

Most standard cocopeat type : Optima  
 Most standard growbag dimensions (l\*w\*h) in cm: 100\*15\*8,5 after expansion  
 100\*20\*8,5 after expansion

Most standard preparation : Buffered or washed  
 EC < 1,0 in 1:1,5 dilution method  
 pH between 6.00 and 7.00  
 moisture < 20% at production

The compressed growbags are to be placed on a soil bed or a gutter on a table top. Before planting it is needed to wet up the compressed growbags. A special initial wet up recipe is recommended. This contains: a.o. a low pH and extra Calcium, Magnesium and tracer elements.

Other dimensions and treatments are possible over and above the standard ones listed above; ones which are customised to your specific requirements. We can also vary the coarseness of the Optima cocopeat for specific demands, by changing the percentage of cocochips and coir upon request.

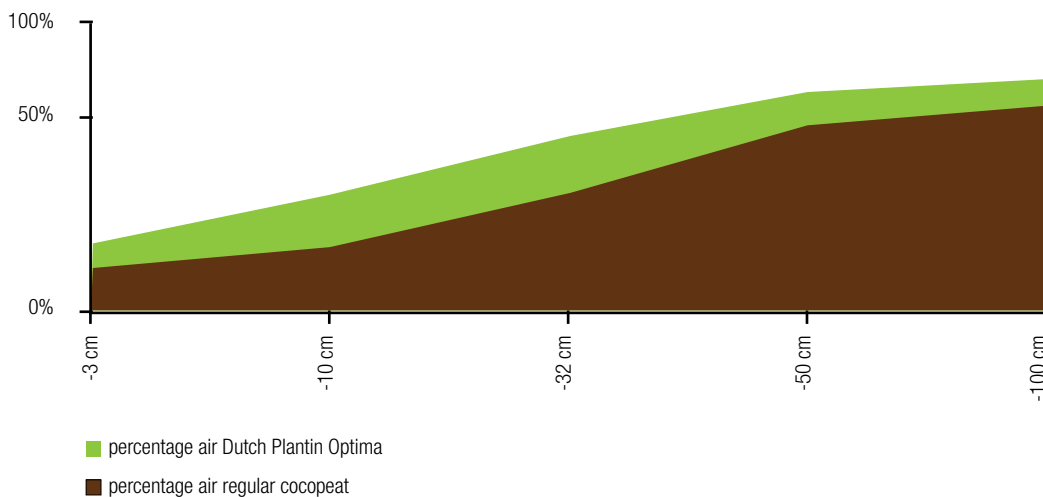
### In short

Strawberry plants need uniformity and stability in the substrate.

The root conditions are optimal with Dutch Plantin Optima:

- It is safe when the growbags are over-drained, because the substrate will not be too wet; no lack of air because of the perfect, physical properties.
- The water is divided throughout the whole substrate, therefore the roots are using the complete grow bag.
- Less influences from a dry climate because of the high water holding capacity.
- Different structures available, depending on the climate and demands of the grower: The Optima cocopeat can be customized by our technical experts in the Netherlands.

Figure 1: pF curve of Regular Cocopeat and Dutch plantin Optima



We are happy to assist you and your consultant to optimize the fertilization of your crop. Once we have an analysis of your base-water we can advise the best product and how to fertilize.

Please contact our helpdesk in the Netherlands (Wim Roosen, accountmanager) for more details or support issues: [wim.roosen@dutchplantin.com](mailto:wim.roosen@dutchplantin.com)



**Disclaimer:** Copyright © October 2010 This leaflet was created with the utmost care. Nevertheless, Dutch Plantin accepts no responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies published in this document.

**Do you want to know more?**  
**Please feel free to ask for more information**  
[contact@dutchplantin.com](mailto:contact@dutchplantin.com)  
 tel 0091 422 231 2822  
 fax 0091 422 231 2823

Our agronomists in Holland are at all times available to supply you with more detailed information on growing Dutch Plantin coir for your crop.

[www.dutchplantin.com](http://www.dutchplantin.com)