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Australian Standard®

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**Potting mixes**

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The following interests are represented on Committee CS/37:

Australian Institute of Horticulture  
Australian Nurserymen's Association  
CSIRO, Division of Soils  
Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Vic  
Department of Agriculture, N.S.W.  
Department of TAFE, N.S.W.  
Testing laboratories

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**Potting mixes**

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✓ **First published as AS 3743—1989.**

## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee on Garden Soils and Potting Mixes. The Standard was requested by the Australian Institute of Horticulture and the CSIRO Division of Soils.

Statements expressed in mandatory terms in Notes to Tables and Figures are deemed to be requirements of this Standard.

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## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Australian Standard  
Potting mixes

## SECTION 1. SCOPE AND GENERAL

**1.1 SCOPE.** This Standard specifies physical, chemical, biological and labelling requirements for potting mixes packaged for retail sale. Potting mixes of both regular and premium quality are covered. Special requirements are also included for mixes labelled as suitable for seedlings, orchids, acid-loving plants and plants that are sensitive to phosphorus.

Test methods for the analysis of potting mixes are set out in Appendices A to G.

NOTE: Appendix H gives guidance on the determination of compliance of a batch.

**1.2 APPLICATION.** All potting mixes shall comply with Section 2 of this Standard and with the following Sections, as applicable:

- (a) Non specialist potting mixes—Section 3.
- (b) Specialist potting mixes—Section 4, Table 4.1 or Table 4.2 as applicable.

**1.3 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS.** The documents below are referred to in this Standard:

- AS  
1152 Test sieves  
1199 Sampling procedures and tables for inspection by attributes  
1399 Guide to AS 1199, Sampling procedures and tables for inspection by attributes  
2490 Sampling procedures and charts for inspection by variables for percent defective  
3900 Quality systems—Guide to selection and use  
3901 Quality systems for design/development, production, installation and servicing  
3902 Quality systems for production and installation  
3903 Quality systems for final inspection and test
- \* Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater (16th Edition) 1985 prepared and published jointly by American Public Health Association, American Water Works Association and Water Pollution Control Federation

**1.4 DEFINITIONS.** For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions below apply.

**1.4.1 Air-filled porosity**—the percentage of air, by volume, in a potting mix after it has been watered and drained under standard conditions.

**1.4.2 Batch**—a limited quantity of product which is made in one cycle of manufacture and is uniform with respect to starting material, composition and method of manufacture.

**1.4.3 Potting mix**—a growing medium suitable for the culture of a wide range of plants in containers in domestic environments.

**1.4.4 Premium mix**—a potting mix with properties as defined in the tables of this Standard. Most particularly, its soluble nitrogen content and low ability to deprive plants of soluble nitrogen enable it to sustain good plant growth for at least one month without added fertilizer.

**1.4.5 Primary package**—any form of packaging material, i.e. any packet, envelope, box, jar or the like, which is in intimate contact with the product and which is not intended to serve as a transport package. Also known as 'immediate package'.

**1.4.6 Shall**—indicates that a statement is mandatory.

**1.4.7 Should**—indicates that a statement is recommended or advised.

**1.5 NOTATION.** The following symbols are used in this Standard:

dS	decisiemen
dS/m	decisiemens per metre
mS/cm	millisiemens per centimetre (1 dS/m = 1 mS/cm)

**1.6 CLASSIFICATION.**

**1.6.1 General.** Non specialist potting mixes shall comply with the requirements given in Table 3.1 and shall be classified as either—

- (a) regular; or
- (b) premium.

**1.6.2 Specialist mixes.** Potting mixes intended for specialist applications may be classified as follows:

- (a) Seedling.
- (b) Orchid.
- (c) Low phosphorus.
- (d) Acid.

Regular grade specialist mixes shall comply with the requirements given in Table 4.1.

Premium grade specialist mixes shall comply with the requirements given in Table 4.2.

*Enclosed as an ANSI Standard (ANSI/APHA/AWWA/WPCF 10035-1985)*