

# **What Is the Best Growing Medium for Basil?**



Basil is a wonderful herb. It goes well in a variety of different foods. Moreover, you can use it to spice up beverages. However, it's costly to buy basil leaves at the

store. Therefore, you can save a lot of money by planting basil in your own container garden instead. You can use soil, of course. However, is that the best growing medium for basil? Let's explore.

## Growing Basil in Soil

If you assumed that you should plant basil in soil, then you're not alone. We plant most herbs in soil, after all. This is certainly an option as a growing medium for basil. [The Kitchn](#) explains that basil thrives in soil with a neutral pH. While you might add compost at the start of the growing season (which is typically in May), you don't want to make the soil too rich. If you do, it surprisingly dulls the flavor of the herb itself. Instead, just make sure that you keep the soil moist, but drained well, and let the basil grow.

## Alternatives to Soil As Growing Medium for Basil

Soil is a perfectly suitable choice for growing basil. However, if you want your herbs to thrive, then it's worth exploring other options. [Plantsvsnewbies.com](https://plantsvsnewbies.com) explores what happens when you try to grow basil in a teabag, for example, or on a sponge. Here's what it found:

### Grow Basil In a Tea Bag

In this experiment, you would do the following:

1. Make a vertical slit at the center of a teabag.
2. Add the basil seeds to the tea inside of the bag.
3. Close the slit on the teabag.
4. Place the entire bag in a water container cover.
5. Sprinkle it with cinnamon powder. This helps to prevent

fungi.

## Grow Basil in a Sponge

Alternatively, you might choose a sponge as a growing medium for basil. Cut a small piece off of a sponge such as a Magic Eraser. Make small slices and set the basil seeds inside. Place the sponge inside of the water container cover.

## Conclusion: Best Growing Medium for Basil

After growing the basil in these different options for two weeks, we discover that fungi tend to take over the teabag. Therefore, it's not the best growing medium for basil. The sponge works better. However, the soil does end up as the best option.

Of course, if this type of experiment intrigues you, then you might want to play around with different water and sun options using the tea bag and sponge to see if you can get better results with them. This type of direct experimentation can help you better understand the plants in your garden.

On the other hand, if you trust the experiment, then you can go ahead and plant your basil in the soil. The Kitchen recommends keeping the plant in the sun for about six hours per day. Plant seeds about one foot apart, water the base (not the leaves) when dry, and plant it alongside chamomile, oregano, peppers, or lettuce for best results. Then enjoy the tasty rewards!

## Read More:

- [Frugal Container Gardening](#)
- [Do Pre-Packaged Seeds Grow Faster Than Fresh Seeds?](#)
- [5 Houseplants That Won't Waste Your Money](#)

- [Costco Cash Back Rewards: What You Need To Know](#)
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# **Can Styrofoam Be a Substitute for Perlite?**





CAN STYROFOAM BE A  
*Substitute for  
Perlite?*

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Can you use styrofoam as a perlite substitute? You might also be wondering why to use perlite in the first place. Here's the lowdown on this helpful garden amendment.

## What is perlite?

Perlite is sourced from volcanic glass with high water content. During the manufacturing process, the application of heat turns the glass into small, white balls.

These tiny white balls help aerate the soil and improve its water retention abilities. Unlike vermiculite, another popular garden product, perlite doesn't absorb as much water.

Both perlite and vermiculite are considered non-renewable mineral sources.

Many commercial soil mixes contain either material to improve soil condition.

Perlite is relatively inexpensive and easy to use. But working with perlite can get dusty, so make sure to wear a mask when mixing it with soil.

## Styrofoam as perlite substitute?

Not everyone can source perlite easily. So can you use styrofoam instead?

The short answer? Yes.

However, not all types of styrofoam will work. Things like packing peanuts are a poor choice for a perlite substitute.

Some gardeners swear that grocery store meat trays (as long as they're thick) will work just as well as perlite when zapped through the blender.

Unfortunately, styrofoam is pretty terrible for the environment. It's not biodegradable and contains chemicals that can leech out into the soil, polluting groundwater.

Overall, styrofoam is a bad substitute for perlite. I would not recommend it for use in gardening.

In fact, I'd suggest completely avoiding products packaged in styrofoam.

## Other substitutes for perlite

Aside from perlite, gardeners can use the following:

- vermiculite
- sand
- horticultural grit
- finely crushed gravel
- rice husks

Peat is another substitute for perlite, but it's not one I recommend. The reason is that while peat moss is technically a renewable resource, harvesting it damages [valuable wetlands](#). Additionally, peat moss takes hundreds, if not thousands, of years to form.

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## Which Indoor Plants Purify Air?





WHICH INDOOR PLANTS  
*Purify Air?*

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Let's get one thing straight. You probably won't improve your home's air quality by filling it with [indoor plants](#) that can purify the air. According to a [National Geographic](#) piece from

2019, houseplants won't do much to clean your home's air.

Most of the advice about air-purifying houseplants comes from an old NASA study. In a [2019 article in the Atlantic](#), Robinson Meyer reports that the study was indeed on the up and up, but it doesn't quite translate to the real world. Plants do have cleaning abilities, but they just can't handle cleaning an entire room, let alone a whole house of pollutants. Cleaning the air in your entire house would necessitate becoming a plant hoarder—which, come to think of it, isn't a terribly unappealing idea.

It's no surprise that this myth about indoor plants that can purify air has proliferated online. I believed it at one point! NASA did a study? It must be true! Unfortunately, that study results have taken on a life of their own. People love to talk about the air purifying qualities of plants.

But unless you're filling your home from floor to ceiling with plants—eliminating a clear path to walk—your pretty house plants aren't doing much to clean the air. You're better off investing in an air purifier if you're worried about air quality.

Houseplants still have a variety of benefits, though! They're attractive and are an inexpensive way to spruce up a room. They make great gifts, and research even shows that having houseplants can help boost your [mental health](#).

## A Brief Word About Air Quality

In-home air quality is a complicated thing. Gardeners love to spend time outdoors but did you know that keeping your windows open can contribute to poor indoor air quality? If there's a lot of traffic nearby or the air is particularly bad outside, letting it in will only serve to tank the air quality in your home.

Other things that can contribute to [poor air quality](#) include:

- Cooking
- Faulty appliances
- Fuel-burning appliances, like a gas stove or furnace
- New construction
- Household products like cleaning supplies and candles
- Mold

Don't let their lack of air-purifying abilities dissuade you from acquiring [houseplants](#). They certainly won't make your air worse. Here's a video that goes through some of the easiest houseplants to take care of. Bonus: they're also some of the easiest to find for cheap!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vy3oE5xAivY>

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## 5 Common Gardening Myths You Should Forget About





The gardening world is rife with anecdotal information. Since I started gardening over 10 years ago, I've run into my fair share of common gardening myths. People love to make big

claims about their gardening techniques. It turns out, though, that while the “secret sauce” might have some truth to it, it’s usually a lot more complicated. Correlation doesn’t equate to causation, after all. Just because your [fertilizer](#) application led to better growth last year doesn’t mean you’ll achieve the same results the next. Why? Adding fertilizer willy nilly is a bad idea. It can create nutrient imbalances and produce harmful runoff. Which other common gardening myths are hogwash? Let’s take a look.

## Coffee Grounds are Great for Your Garden

Don’t listen to people who try to sell you on this common gardening myth. Coffee grounds are best kept for your compost pile. Spent grounds can actually do more harm than good when added to your garden. Why? Because they often contain high amounts of caffeine, they can actually [suppress plant growth](#).

## Cedar Wood Chips Are Bad For Your Plants

I avoided cedar wood chips for the longest time because I had read this gardening myth online, and it stuck in my head. Years later, I decided to try it out for myself. It turns out the wood chips had no ill effect on my plants. In fact, adding mulch actually *helped* my plants better conserve water, which improved their growth significantly. According to [OSU Extension Service](#), the poor plant health that people attribute to cedar chips may really be related to other problems entirely.

## Epsom Salts Can Improve Plant Growth

Ugh. This is a widespread gardening myth, and it drives me up the wall. Don’t add nutrients to your soil without [testing](#) it! That’s it. That’s the takeaway. Epsom salts are high in magnesium, so if your soil already contains plenty of magnesium, there’s absolutely NO point in tossing Epsom salts into your garden.



## **Fertilize On a Yearly Basis**

Again, fertilizing without understanding the composition of your soil is a big mistake. This is a common gardening myth that often crops up as a piece of gardening wisdom in gardening guides, articles, and more. Fertilizing depends on the plant in question and the soil in which it's growing. Don't apply fertilizer unless you understand WHY you're doing it.

## **Suffocate Weeds With Mulch**

Technically, this is both a gardening myth and a gardening truth. Lots of mulch will suffocate weeds, but too much can also cut off oxygen to your plants' roots. Never add more than 3 inches of mulch. You're better off weeding before adding mulch than trying to kill weeds with an ultra-thick layer of the stuff.

## **Eggshells Are a Great Source of Calcium**

This extremely common gardening myth has some truth to it. Eggs *do* contain calcium! However, barely any will make its way into your garden by way of the shells. Eggshells take an incredibly long time to break down—even when added to a compost pile—so they're pretty useless in the garden. Even so, people still swear by them. Another eggshell myth is that they help deter soft-bodied pests like slugs. Not true. Use diatomaceous earth instead.