

Sustainable Growing Containers

Are Top-of-Mind for Today's Gardeners



Bioplastics

Fiber molded pulp

The word “sustainable” is a common buzzword currently attached to everything from clothing, energy, coffee, and even gardening. But beyond all the marketing jargon, growers, garden centers, and retailers want to know just how receptive today’s consumers are towards purchasing more sustainable products.

Here are a few reputable statistics to provide clarification on the subject.

- **The global popularity of internet searches for sustainable goods has increased 71% in just five years.** (*World Wildlife Fund, June 2021*)
- **68% of global consumers believe companies are responsible for sustainable-focused innovation.** (*EY Future Consumer Index, June 2021*)
- **In the United States, 64% of consumers are willing and even expect to pay more for sustainable products.** (*BusinessWire, March 2021*)
- **77% of consumers are more inclined to purchase from a company with a firm corporate social responsibility.** (*Aflac, July 2020*)

The statistics above counter the misguided belief that organizations implementing more sustainable practices will limit their overall revenue and growth. Professor Knut Haanaes of the International Institute for Management Development in Switzerland disagrees, saying, “Simply put, sustainability is a business approach

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to creating long-term value. Sustainability is built on the assumption that developing such strategies fosters company longevity.”

Growers, garden centers, and retailers can no longer ignore the long-term benefits of sustainability, driven in part by the increased demands of a more sophisticated and environmentally conscious consumer.

Today’s Gardeners

A new generation of gardeners who understands and values a more sustainable lifestyle is impacting society and will expect the growers, garden centers, and retailers they choose to do business with to offer the products they crave.

This new generation of consumers is most concerned about a product’s packaging. The growing container (or flower pot as many refer to it) is the “packaging” most obvious to consumers when purchasing plant products during the season.

Manufacturers realized the void in sustainable growing containers and developed new containers to help growers, garden centers, and retailers retain their customers by offering them options alongside traditional resin containers.

There are many variations of sustainable growing containers on the market today, but two of the more common solutions are **fiber molded pulp** and **bioplastics**.

Fiber Molded Pulp

Fiber molded pulp containers often breathe like clay pots and provide an optimal environment for root systems.

Many break down quickly when planted directly or worked into the soil, avoiding root shock common with transplanting. Manufacturing techniques do vary with fiber molded pulp containers. For maximum sustainability, containers should be manufactured using recycled newsprint or corrugated fibers, produced in a closed-loop water recycling facility, and contain no chemicals or additives that pollute the environment during decomposition.

Bioplastics

Unlike traditional plastics, bioplastics are not derived from petroleum but rather a more sustainable substance such as wood pulp. They’re designed without compromising the strength and performance often associated with plastic containers and can be easily reused or responsibly disposed of. In addition, there are no microplastics after the container breaks down, no harmful PFAS or heavy metals, and they are non-GMO and non-toxic. However, it’s important to remember that the features and benefits of bioplastic containers are contingent upon the raw materials being sourced during manufacturing.

Certifications are Critical

Consumers are becoming more aware of greenwashing techniques. This tactic involves companies spending time and money trying to convince the public of their “eco-friendly” status rather than developing the products and processes necessary to defend their ESG (environmental, social, and corporate governance).

That is why it’s critical when your organization is sourcing a “sustainably” branded product to add to your inventory that the vendor has provided a credible, up-to-date, third-party certification. In addition, properly vetting growing containers provides consumers with a

level of trust in your products and your dedication to an overall environmental commitment.

Benefits to Your Business

In closing, growers, garden centers, and retailers should now understand that consumers’ growing interest in sustainability is not a fad and includes the following benefits to your organization:

- **Sustainable growing containers help differentiate your business in a crowded market instead of being branded as just another commodity.**
- **Your corporate responsibility will attract passionate and motivated individuals to your business while helping to retain others with a focus on well-being and environmental impact.**
- **Sustainable growing containers help combat the global challenges your business will face in the future - allowing the company to become an influencer.**
- **Finally, it increases your trust and overall reputation with your greatest stakeholder - your customers.**

For more information on HC’s full line of sustainable growing containers, ask your dedicated BWI representative today!