

Hydrofarm



## How to propagate woody cuttings in Preforma®

Preforma is a peat based propagation material designed to work with both seed and cutting based crops. Growers will find that Preforma will allow the crop to grow at an optimal rate with minimal plant losses. All Preforma products are designed to work within existing Hydrofarm equipment.

### Moisture

Preforma trays come pre-moistened. We recommend that growers water the trays ahead of use so that moisture level in the micro-zone around the seed or cutting is optimal. When using a heating pad or heating element to warm the media during propagation the grower needs to keep an extra eye on the Preforma to avoid it drying too quickly. We suggest the grower water Preforma when the top of the media dries; you will notice it lightens in color as it dries. As with all crops water thoroughly when you water to drive roots down into the media.

Water quality is important to the crop. We suggest avoiding watering with high chlorine levels or with water with extremely high bi-carbonate levels. Note that peat based Preforma has good buffering capacity and as such most municipal tap water in the US is suitable for watering in Preforma.

### Plant Health

Preforma is a sterile media. Rooting stimulators or hormones may be used, depending on grower preference.

Preforma is pH balanced and we recommend that the pH be kept in the range between 6 and 7.

Preforma trays come shipped with a nutrient charge and while it will not need any additional nutrients during propagation, we suggest that the grower add nutrients as per their preference.

After rooting we suggest that the Preforma be allowed to 'dry-down' between watering. Many growers add additional misting to the foliage and if you follow this practice it is important to not over wet the media. Keep an eye on the color of the Preforma and allow the media to lighten in color ahead of watering.

### Domes

Dome height is important to keep the foliage from touching the side of the dome – we try to minimize spots of disease contamination. Make sure the dome is tall enough to accommodate plant growth. Dome areas can be kept too wet and too dark for healthy plant growth. After the roots are established in the cutting or seedlings, consider removing the dome for a few hours daily to reduce humidity and improve overall plant health.

### Cuttings

Optimal cutting size and cutting location on the stock plant is important to speed of rooting. We prefer a thicker cutting from the mid area of the plant. Avoid the fast

growing apical (stem tip) cuttings as well as cuttings from the very old wood of the bottom of the plant. Cuttings should have a good color – a fresh appearance and reasonable stem thickness. Shorter and thicker is better than thin and longer. We suggest the upper third of the plant is the best area for taking cuttings, again avoiding the very top apical cuttings. Cutting length of 2-3” allows the grower to stick 1” deep into Preforma. Cuttings should have one or two sets of leaves; pinch away any flowers or flower buds. We recommend that Preforma be watered just prior to sticking the cuttings to improve the water seal around the cutting.

#### Rooting Hormones

Preforma is a sterile media. Rooting hormones are a growers preference and should be used according to the individual product instructions.