

# PLANTER PLANTING GUIDE

Well potted GRC planters have proven to be an excellent option for the beautification of outdoor living spaces. However, to get the intended result, the potting process needs to be done properly to create the right environment for the planter vegetation to thrive and look healthy. The key issues to address in the proper potting process are: -

## **The selection of the right plants**

The first, and arguably the most important, thing to do to ensure that you get the most out of your planter installation is to select the right vegetation for the planter. Anyone can make a plant or tree look good in a planter when it is initially installed. However, plants and trees are living species that grow above and below the ground naturally and all have their own specific environmental conditions that are optimum for their health such as the size of the planter (i.e., their growing area), the local climate, and the location in which you want to install the planter (i.e., sunny or shaded). Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you consult a professional horticulturist to ensure you select the right vegetation for your planter installation.

## **The preparation of the planter for planting**

All vegetation needs a drink to survive but, except for specialized varieties, plants and trees can become unhealthy if their roots are living in a pool of water. Getting the balance between enough and too much water in a planter is an essential element in keeping planter vegetation healthy. To get this balance correct, the appropriate setup of a planter in preparation for planting is essential.

## **■ A Guide to Preparing a Planter for Planting**

The following is a summary of the key things to consider in the preparing a planter for planting: -

### **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO**

#### **Place the planter on a firm flat surface**

Planters can become quite heavy when fully planted. Therefore, they should be installed on a firm flat surface to avoid stress cracking.

## Seal the inside of the planter

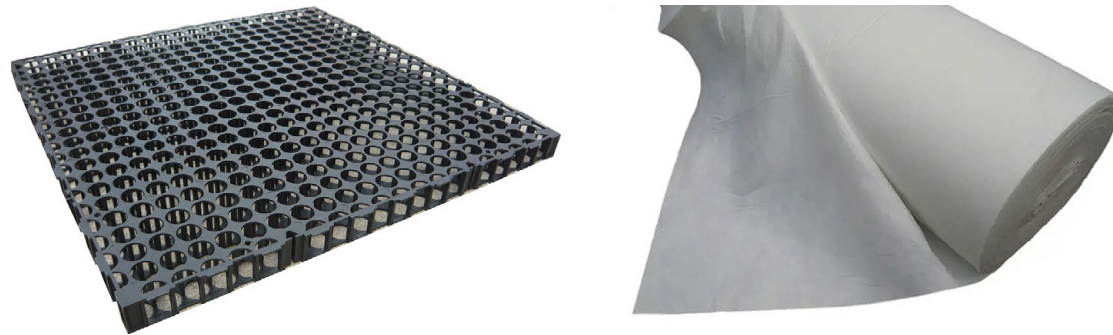
Good quality GRC planters will typically come with an internal sealant but if your GRC planters are not sealed they should be. An acrylic membrane or a bitumen sealant are the two typical types of sealants used on the internal walls of GRC planters. However, if you are going to be using an automatic watering system or a drainage riser, it is recommended that you pay a little bit more for the bitumen sealant.

## Cover drainage holes with a drainage cell and/or a drainage riser

Good drainage is essential for healthy plant grow, so it is important to ensure that planter drainage holes do not get clogged. Satu Bumi would recommend one of the following two approaches to stopping drainage holes from clogging: -

- **With the addition of a drainage cell**

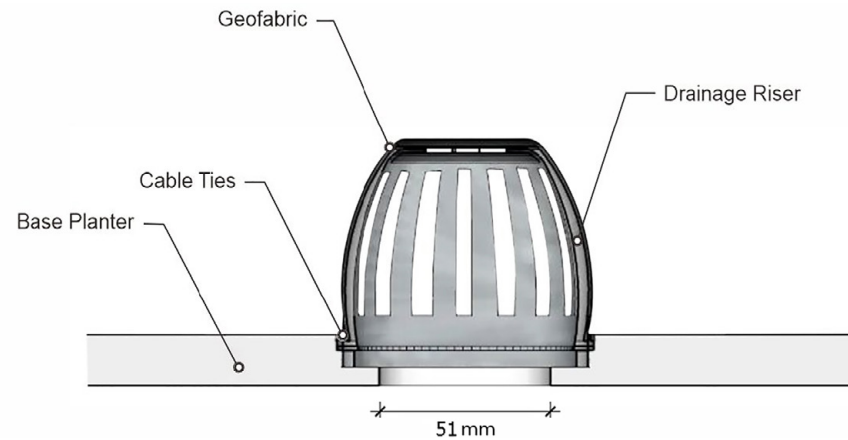
A section of drainage cell should be placed on the bottom of a planter over the drainage holes and then covered with a layer of geofabric. The type of drainage cell used is not that important because there are several manufacturers of drainage cells, and they all do a similar role. However, it is important to use un-woven geofabric which allows the passage of water without allowing the soil to pass through.



EXAMPLES OF A SECTION OF DRAINAGE CELLS AND A ROLL OF UN-WOVEN GEOFABRIC

- **With the addition of a drainage riser**

Drainage risers are helpful if you want to hold a controlled amount of water at the bottom of a planter where it is accessible to the roots of the planter vegetation but not enough to cause plant root rot. However, drainage risers should not be used unless the inside of the planters is sealed with a bitumen sealant.



**SATU BUMI STAINLESS STEEL DRAINAGE RISER**

### **Add a layer of drainage filler**

The drainage filler layer can be any coarse inert material that will enable water to pass through easily and yet be large enough in size that it can never block the water flow to the geofabric such as coarse gravel, pebbles, or scoria.

### **Segment the drainage filler from the potting mix – only when a drainage riser is not being used**

To prevent the smaller particles of the potting mix from filtering through the coarse drainage layer and eventually clogging the geofabric over time, it is valuable to add a layer of geofabric or even fly wire mesh (which must be plastic to avoid rusting). However, if you use fly wire mesh, make sure the holes in the mesh are at least 1.5 mm wide.

Don't use this layer when a drainage riser is being used because it will stop the planter roots from reaching the water held at the bottom of the planter by the drainage riser.

### **Use a good quality premium potting mix**

Premium potting mixes are specially blended, free draining and sterile to prevent weed and disease infestation. Premium potting mix is more expensive than standard potting mix but will be well worth it over time. Therefore, third party landscapers should not be allowed to use sub-premium potting mixes to reduce cost.

### **Use a good quality mulch**

Mulch will help reduce water evaporation and helps to prevent weeds. However, avoid the use of artificially coloured mulch because the colour will leach over time and has the potential to discolour a GRC planter.

### **Raise the planter**

Quality GRC planters will generally come with raised feet to enable free water flow from the drainage holes. However, if the planter has a flat bottom without feet, you should chock the planter in some way to enable the water to flow easily from the drainage holes and to enable air to flow under the planter to dry out any unnecessary moisture.

### **Use a bitumen sealant with automatic irrigation systems**

Automatic irrigation systems require a good drainage system. However, from time to time these drainage systems can become blocked. This will cause the irrigation water to pond at the bottom of the planter. Therefore, to avoid the potential of the ponded water leaking from the planter it should include an internal bitumen sealant.

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO**

### **Choose the wrong plants**

Do not choose plants that have an invasive root system or for which the root ball will eventually end up too large for the chosen planter.

### **Choose the wrong potting mix**

Do not use garden soil instead of premium potting mix because it will compact over time and not allow the water to flow freely.

### **Mix potting mix types**

Don't mix soil or standard potting mix with premium potting mix to make the premium potting go further.

### **Use sand in the filler layer**

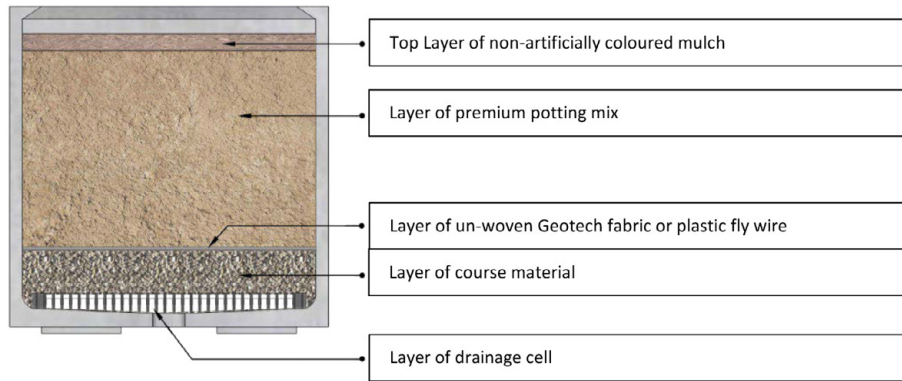
Don't use sand in the drainage filler layer because it will compact and prevent the water from flowing freely.

## Damage the internal waterproofing membrane

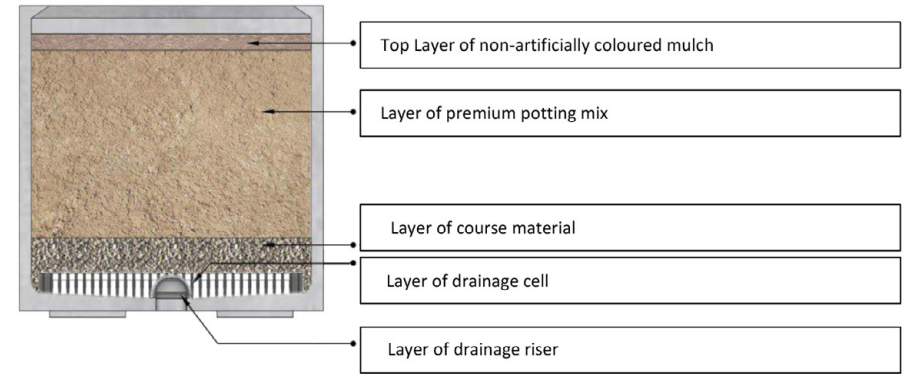
If the internal waterproofing membrane is damaged, it must be repaired to avoid leakage.

## How a GRC planter should be prepared for planting

### Without a drainage riser



### With a drainage riser



## Disclaimer

The information in this document is provided in good faith. However, Satu Bumi assumes no responsibility for the results of the practical application of this information unless the application is provided directly by Satu Bumi employees or parties contracted by Satu Bumi.

sales@satubumi.com.au  
 +61 (03) 5292 1001  
 satubumi.com.au