



NATURAL TECHNOLOGIES
INSULATE ■ FILTER ■ GROW

Trombinccino – A healthy future vegetable

Trombonccino, or as it is called in its country of origin, Italy; Zuccetta Rampicante, or Pumpkin Trombetta D'alberga (evidently its origin is the Florence area, in the D'alberga county) is basically Cucurbita Moschata which makes it the proud "brother" of the better known Butternut.

Genetically both these are almost the same and are considered "winter squash" - therefore a long shelf-life product. Unlike Butternut, Trombonccino is perfectly edible as it is formed still young and does not need to mature, ie; turning its colour to brown/orange. The fruit can be harvested very early - similar to its distant relative, the Baby Marrow.

It is characteristically hard with a smooth texture and ideally suited for stir fry, roasted in the oven or added to soup.

Trombonccino, if left to grow hanging will develop a long sausage-like fruit of more than a meter long. If left on the ground it will spiral creating a Trombone-like shape, similar to the musical instrument for which it was named.

Trombonccino is typically a summer vegetable as all its relatives are, and will grow vigorously as a climber on trellises. It can be grown in winter in heated greenhouses and actually produce very well. In an experiment at Randfontein, an area relatively colder than the rest of Gauteng, it grew very well - and performed impressively - in a hydroponics tunnel using coarse perlite as growth medium.

Advantages lie in its nature of growing fast and producing plenty of fruits. It is fun to watch the fruit forming and developing almost in front of your eyes.

It is a valuable addition to the diet, as well as tasty and nourishing. In the not too distant future, it will probably compete with the butternut for shelf-space in supermarkets. Bon Appétit!



General Observations about Perlite

In general, after years of testing and experimentation, several observations can be made about perlite and its use in potted plants:

1. Plots and pots containing fine, medium and coarse perlite have had exactly the same weight and size as those using traditional peat mixes. Many tests have proved there should be no hesitation in using finer grades and that 100% perlite could be used and be just as successful as traditional peat mixes.
2. Tests on the effects of various grades of perlite on the rooting of cuttings and in the germination of seeds found that in all cases, regardless of size, rooting's were the same in time, size and quality. In fact, finer grades required less water to maintain healthy roots. In seed germination, however, coarse grades of perlite did not do as well as finer grades.
3. Perlite also was tested for use in drying out flowers. Flowers were placed in pans of fine perlite and covered lightly. After standing for 3-6 days (or long enough for drying to occur), the flowers were removed and dusted off. Flowers also can be dried using fine perlite and a microwave (approximately 3-5 minutes).
4. 100% perlite has been used growing orchids. The fine and medium grades have been tried but coarse perlite did the best.

Conclusions

1. Perlite is one of nature's best media for growing plants. It does not appear to make any difference which grade is used except with certain plants like orchids.
2. It is possible to grow most plants in perlite alone although usually the finer grades and medium grades will work better and require less water.



3. Seeds can be started in any grade of perlite but with smaller seeds, finer grades of perlite would be recommended.
4. Perlite is good for greenhouse benches. And as an added benefit insects and snails do not like perlite!
5. Perlite (especially the fine grade) is excellent for drying flowers.
6. Perlite is ideal for outdoor containers. They can be moved around easily because perlite in the mix lightens it besides improving drainage.

WHY PERLITE SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED AS PREFERRED GROWING MEDIUM IN HYDROPONICS CULTURE?

1. Long term usage.
2. Easy and low cost of shifting from one growing cycle to the next.
3. Cost effective.
4. Significant saving on water and nutrients cost per growing cycle (up to 50%).
5. Increased yield.
6. Uniformity of crop production.

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After all, when the products you make were formed millions of years ago, then 50 years is only the beginning