



# Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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## ***Good Things From the Earth and Sea ... FoxFarm Potting Soil***

**Jeremy Johnson, Johnson's Buyer & Kansas Certified Nursery Professional**

I think most gardeners know that regular old top soil isn't the best (or even good!) for container gardening. From there, however, most of us have traditionally chosen some sort of "soilless" mix. These mixes generally include any number of things, but most are peat based with other ingredients varying greatly by brand.

### ***Buyer Beware***

A certain national brand advertises that their potting mix will "grow plants twice as big" as ordinary soil. If you read the disclaimer in fine print, it spells out ... you guessed it, "results will vary." What does this mean? Either your plants will grow twice as big ... or they won't. That company spends an enormous amount of money every year advertising their fertilizers and soils. While their products really aren't too bad, there ARE other options. Options that can and will make a HUGE difference in your containers, and once you try them, I know you'll be hooked.

### ***FoxFarm Products***

At Johnson's, we've carried the FoxFarm products for a couple of years now, and we began offering their potting and planting mixes in 2007. I had seen their soils in various trade publications over the years, but finally picked them up this year. Boy, am I glad we did. FoxFarm produces all of their products in small batches to ensure premium quality and optimum results. While FoxFarm offers several soil/planting mixes, I'm going to focus on my favorite, the Ocean Forest® Potting Soil.

### ***Ocean Forest Potting Soil***

FoxFarm promotes Ocean Forest as "Good Things From the Earth and Sea." This mix is a delightful blend of fish, crab and shrimp meals, earthworm castings, and fossilized bat guano combined with unsterilized forest humus and premium peat mosses. When I got my hands into a bag this spring, it was the finest potting mix I had ever experienced. The texture is fabulous!

I also bring to your attention the unsterilized nature of FoxFarm's soils. FoxFarm closely monitors all of their composting, which allows them to produce a soil with huge amounts of beneficial bacteria--just another thing you won't find in the national brand. With all of the beneficial bacteria in the mix, along with the fish meals, earthworm castings, bat guano, etc., you are really building a very strong soil structure for your plants, and when we feed the soil, plants are happy.

### ***Potting Soil Comparison***

This spring at Johnson's, we did a few tests comparing the FoxFarm Ocean Forest with a couple of other brands. The pictures really speak for themselves, as the FoxFarm plants are not only larger (and not leggy), but more floriferous and have a greater intensity to the flower color. You probably have most of your containers already planted for this summer, but I would challenge you to plant just one more pot, using the FoxFarm Ocean Forest. You'll be glad you did. ■