

**GREENHOUSE PROPAGATION AT WINDY CITY HARVEST**

**SOIL BLOCKING STEP-BY-STEP GUIDELINES**

*Plants have been grown in cubes of soil since some 2,000 years ago. Aztec farmers from Xochimilco, Mexico used 4-5 inch cubes of partially decomposed inverted sod for growing crops.*

*TOOLS/MATERIALS REQUIRED:*

*-Soil mixing bin*

*-Soil blocker (6, 12, 20, mini, or hand blocker)*

*-Shovel (for mixing)*

*-Soil Spatula*

*-Potting Mix*

*-Water*

**STEPS:**

1. Empty entire bag of potting soil into soil mixing bin. Add roughly one part water to three parts potting mix. Add small amounts of water and mix with shovel. Add more water as needed-- It’s easier to add more water than take some away. *Desired Consistency*: form a ‘ball ‘ with soil and squeeze out water—when dropped from 3 feet above bin, soil should hold its shape. There should be no standing water visible in the mixing bin.
2. Smooth soil out flat so that the height of the pile is 1.5 inches above the height of the soil blocker. Push the blocker through the soil slowly yet firmly until it hits the bottom of the soil mixing tray. You should see a small amount of water seep out from the soil onto the top of the soil blocker. If not, your mix is too dry. Turn the blocker from side to side a couple times and lift out of the bin. Soil should stay evenly in the blocker without effort once lifted.
3. Move soil blocker onto the appropriate place on the seeding tray of choice. Snug the soil blocker against the sides of the tray or against the previous block so that blocks don’t dry out due to excessive air space. With blocker in appropriate place pull up on the spring handle and lift soil blocker out in a clean vertical motion. Use the soil spatula to push blocks tightly together.
4. Spray soil off the blocker or knock it off gently and repeat.