



Designation: D2978 – 23

Standard Test Method for Volume of Peat and Peat-Based Growing Media¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D2978; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reappraisal. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reappraisal.

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the measurement of the volume of uncompressed (loose) and compressed (baled) peat and peat-based growing media and is used as a quality control measurement to determine if the package contains the labeled amount of material. The results of this test method is highly dependent on the experience of the personnel running the procedure.

1.2 This standard is for peat and peat-based growing media only. While it is possible for other types of growing media to use this standard it is outside the scope and the methodology may have to be altered to accommodate a different growing media.

1.3 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard. Except, that the sieve designations are typically identified using the “alternative” system in accordance with Practice E11, such as 3 in. and No. 200, instead of the “standard” of 75 mm and 75 μ m, respectively.

1.4 All observed and calculated values shall conform to the guidelines for significant digits and rounding established in Practice D6026.

1.4.1 The procedures used to specify how data are collected/recorded or calculated in this standard are regarded as the industry standard. In addition, they are representative of the significant digits that generally should be retained. The procedures used do not consider material variation, purpose for obtaining the data, special purpose studies, or any considerations for the user’s objectives; and it is common practice to increase or reduce significant digits of reported data to be commensurate with these considerations. It is beyond the scope of this standard to consider significant digits used in analysis methods for engineering design.

1.5 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D18 on Soil and Rock and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.22 on Media for Plant Growth.

Current edition approved July 1, 2023. Published July 2023. Originally approved in 1971. Last previous edition approved in 2015 as D2978 – 15^{e1}. DOI: 10.1520/D2978-23.

responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

1.6 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

D653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids

D3740 Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction

D6026 Practice for Using Significant Digits and Data Records in Geotechnical Data

E11 Specification for Woven Wire Test Sieve Cloth and Test Sieves

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 For definitions of common technical terms in this standard, refer to Terminology D653.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 This test method consists of dividing the particles of peat or peat-based growing media by passing them through a 0.5 in. (12.5 mm) sieve by allowing them to fall into a volume-measuring container and if required, measuring the outer dimensions of uncompressed peat.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is used to quantify the volume of peat and peat-based growing media under consideration in commercial transactions to determine if the package contains the

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard’s Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

labeled quantity. As such, material comes into the test area in an “as sold” condition.

5.2 Peat and peat-based growing media are used by amateur gardeners and professional growers on a volume basis. Failure to follow this standard procedure as written can lead to inaccurate results.

NOTE 1—The quality of the result produced by this standard is dependent on the competence of the personnel performing it, and the suitability of the equipment and facilities used. Agencies that meet the criteria of Practice D3740 are generally considered capable of competent and objective testing/sampling/inspection/etc. Users of this standard are cautioned that compliance with Practice D3740 does not in itself ensure reliable results. Reliable results depend on many factors; Practice D3740 provides a means of evaluating some of those factors.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Sieve*—A 0.5 in. (12.5 mm) sieve conforming to Specification E11.

6.2 *Measuring Container*—A steel or wood bound container with metal having one of the sets of inside dimensions in Table 1:

6.3 *Straight Edge*—A stiff metal straightedge of any convenient length but not less than 20 in. (508 mm) and having a thickness of ¼ in. (6.4 mm).

6.4 *Dimension Measuring Device*—A tape measure, ruler, or similar device with sufficient capacity to measure, without estimation, the baled peat or peat-based growing media and readable to 0.5 in. (12.5 mm) or better.

7. Procedure

7.1 A test specimen is considered one intact bag or bale of peat or peat-based growing media. The volume can only be determined once per test specimen. It is not permissible to reuse peat or peat-based growing media for volume determination. It is suggested to have at least 3 test specimens available for use in case something happens to the first or second one and the measurement must be repeated.

7.2 Obtain the test specimen from an undamaged packaged bale or bag that has no visible signs of tears or openings in the packaging. If the packaging of the bale or bag is torn, do not use the bale or bag for testing.

7.3 If the compression ratio needs to be known, measure and record the width, length, and height of the bale to the nearest 0.5 in. (12.5 mm). When outside wrappers thicker than 0.75 in.

(19.1 mm) are in place, correct the measurements to account for the thickness of the outside wrapper.

7.4 Select the measuring container most closely corresponding to the amount of volume the label states is contained in the package.

7.5 Take care not to lose any peat or peat-based growing media during transfer; losing even a small amount affects the volume determination.

7.6 Place the 0.5 in. (12.5 mm) sieve at a height of 18 in. (457.2 mm) above the selected measuring container.

7.7 Open the package and loosen the peat or peat-based growing media with your hands to break any agglomerations of peat of peat-based growing media, taking care not to lose any peat or peat-based growing media. Place the contents on top of the sieve and sieve the peat or peat-based growing media into the measuring container.

7.8 Add peat or peat-based growing media that is retained on the sieve and cannot be loosened by hand to the measuring container beneath the screen.

7.9 When the measuring container is filled to the top of the container, level off the measuring container using the straightedge, at a 45 degree angle with the leading edge being the smaller portion of the angle as not to compress the test material, to strike off excess peat or peat-based growing media. The excess is to be used to fill the next measuring container and does not require additional sieving. Put the peat or peat-based growing media from the filled box aside in individual pile until all the peat or peat-based growing media have been sieved. Measure and record the volume, V_n of each full measuring container according to the size of the container.

7.10 For the last measuring container, level the peat or peat-based growing media inside the measuring container and, if not full, measure the height, H , of the peat or peat-based growing media to the nearest 0.5 in. (12.5 mm).

8. Calculation

8.1 Calculations are shown using inch-pound units. Other units are permissible provided appropriate conversion factors are used to maintain consistency of units throughout the calculations, and similar significant digits or resolution, or both are maintained.

8.2 Calculate the total volume of peat of peat-based growing media, V_t , using the following equation:

TABLE 1 Measuring Container Inside Dimensions

Size (ft ³)	Measuring Container Inside Dimensions (W × L × H)	Size (L)	Measuring Container Inside Dimensions (W × L × H)
½	12 × 12 × 12 in. with line scribed at 6 in. from the bottom	14.2	305 × 305 × 305 mm with line scribed at 152 mm from the bottom
¾	12 × 12 × 12 in. with line scribed at 9 in. from the bottom	21.2	305 × 305 × 305 mm with line scribed at 229 mm from the bottom
1	12 × 12 × 12 in.	28.3	305 × 305 × 305 mm
2	16 × 16 × 13.5 in.	56.6	406 × 406 × 343 mm
5	16 × 16 × 33.75 in.	141.6	406 × 406 × 857 mm