

Sonoco Manufacturing Biodegradable ReadyGrow(TM) Planters for Metrolina Greenhouses

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Spring herbs now offered in new biodegradable planter

HARTSVILLE, S.C., Apr 15, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON) is now producing biodegradable ReadyGrow(TM) planters for Metrolina Greenhouses' spring herbs. The one-quart planters were released in early March.

Made from 100 percent recycled paperboard produced in Sonoco's paper mills, ReadyGrow biodegradable planters are conveyable and sustainable in a commercial greenhouse environment and biodegrade in soil within 180 days of planting. Sonoco's patent-pending design is user-friendly and allows consumers to plant the entire container in the ground, eliminating mess and reducing the amount of plastic being sent to landfills.

Abe VanWingerden, president, Metrolina Greenhouses, said his company is excited to be the first to market with this new biodegradable planter. "Today's consumers are busier than ever, and with Sonoco's biodegradable pots they are literally able to plant it and forget it," VanWingerden said. "Growing our spring herbs in ReadyGrow pots not only makes our product more sustainable, but also reduces our total carbon footprint by leveraging a local packaging provider. Sonoco manufactures these pots in its Hartsville, S.C., plant, just 100 miles away from our greenhouse. Ultimately, it's a win for our customers, our environment and our supply chain."

"Today's marketplace demands more sustainable packaging," said James Harrell, vice president, Industrial Carriers Division. "Sonoco's new biodegradable planters help achieve these goals and are user-friendly- the pots are made from 100 percent recycled paper and biodegrade in the ground as plants grow."

With the conveyable ReadyGrow planter, retailers are able to offer a truly sustainable package that will not tear apart when watered or lifted from greenhouse trays, and consumers gain a product that is both environmentally friendly and easy to plant.

ReadyGrow pots are porous, allowing oxygen to pass through the container to the roots. Sonoco's RootGuard(TM) technology is a proprietary coating added to ensure the pot withstands greenhouse watering and maintains good water absorption while in the soil. Once planted, the coating breaks down, allowing the plant's roots to penetrate through the pot and branch out into the soil bed to absorb water and nutrients, minimizing transplant shock.

A photo of the ReadyGrow planter can be downloaded at: [/www.box.net/shared/rv6hgftz3r](http://www.box.net/shared/rv6hgftz3r). Learn more about the ReadyGrow planter at www.sonoco.com/productservices/lawnandgarden.aspx.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a \$4.1 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with more than 300 operations in 35 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. Sonoco is a proud member of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. For more information on the Company, visit our Web site at www.sonoco.com.

About Metrolina

Metrolina Greenhouses is a family-owned, wholesale plant and services company that started business in April 1972 and is now the largest single site heated greenhouse in the United States, with an additional 30 acres of outdoor growing space. One of the most automated greenhouses in the United States, Metrolina Greenhouses ships to big box retailers and mass merchandisers, in most states on the East Coast, Southeast and Mid-Atlantic. For additional information on Metrolina, visit our Web site at www.metrolinagreenhouses.com.

SOURCE: Sonoco

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