

## **Sonoco Develops ReadyGrow (TM) Planter with Clemson University**

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### ***Sonoco works with Clemson University's Environmental Horticulture Department to create new biodegradable planter***

HARTSVILLE, S.C., May 17, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Sonoco's (NYSE: SON) new ReadyGrow(TM) planter, released in early March, was developed in conjunction with the Environmental Horticulture department at Clemson University, a top-tier research university in Clemson, S.C. Made from 100 percent recycled paperboard, the ReadyGrow planter is both biodegradable and sustainable in a greenhouse environment.

Dependency on plastics is a serious issue for the horticultural industry. The majority of recyclers do not accept plastic nursery products, resulting in over 300 million pounds of nursery pots, trays and cell packs sent to landfills each year. In order to create a more sustainable alternative to plastic planters for growers, Sonoco partnered with the Environmental Horticulture department at Clemson University.

Clemson helped Sonoco optimize the planter's technology, ensuring that the pot would remain robust in a commercial growing environment and biodegrade once it reached customers' yards. The Horticulture department assisted Sonoco with the development of the planter through trials, testing each iteration of the planter as the technology evolved to ensure mold resistance and commercial greenhouse conveyability.

"An avid gardener, I get tired of the pile of plastic pots that fill my garage each year," said Jim Faust, associate professor of Environmental Horticulture at Clemson University. "When Sonoco asked me to take part in this project, I welcomed the opportunity to participate in the development of a bio-container for the horticultural industry."

"We helped Sonoco to understand the production expectations of greenhouse growers, and the combination of doing production trials at greenhouses and Clemson University allowed us to provide useful feedback to Sonoco during the container's development. It was a dynamic process that I believe has yielded a viable product that the industry will welcome."

James Harrell, vice president, Industrial Carriers Division agrees. "ReadyGrow is the solution to a challenge that has long been building in the horticultural industry - to eliminate the landfill waste caused by the hundreds of millions of plastic nursery pots used each year," he said.

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/productsservices/lawnandgarden.aspx](http://www.sonoco.com/productsservices/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](http://www.sonoco.com).

### **About Clemson University**

Ranked #23 among national public universities, Clemson University is a major, land-grant, science- and engineering-oriented research university that maintains a strong commitment to teaching and student success. Clemson is an inclusive, student-centered community characterized by high academic standards, a culture of collaboration, school spirit and a competitive drive to excel.

SOURCE: Sonoco

Sonoco  
Robin Montgomery, 843-383-7509  
[robin.montgomery@sonoco.com](mailto:robin.montgomery@sonoco.com)