

Advantages of Mega Bales Over Small Package Sizes

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Premier Tech offers a variety of package sizes and formats to accommodate professional growers. For many, Mega Bales are the most advantageous format at various levels. Will you make the leap to mega formats?

Different Formats Available

All bark-based growing media are available in two loose-fill sizes, 2.8 and 60 cu ft. Peat-based growing media are available in 2.8 and 80 cu ft loose-fill bags or in compressed package sizes of 3.8, 55 (Western US and Canada only) and the 135 cu ft (3825 l) Mega Bale (East, Central US and Canada). Since 2020, we also offer a 110 cu ft Mega Bale format from our Eastern Canada facility. Loose-fill packaging is best for growers that do not have bale breakers or prefer the convenience of "add water/ready-to-use" growing media. But for growers that have equipment to process large compressed bales, there is a lower cost per cubic foot of growing medium.

The Mega Bales and Their Many Advantages

Mega Bale formats have a lower cost per cubic foot and is a format that a grower should consider switching to. A common misconception is justifying the upfront cost of purchasing a bale breaker for the Mega Bale. However, depending on a grower's annual usage, the return on investment can be surprisingly fast. Below is an example that shows the cost savings for PRO-MIX[®] BX MYCORRHIZAE[™] when switching from a full truckload of one package size (first column) to a Mega Bale format. The savings are based on the equivalent number of cubic feet in one truckload of the current package size compared to the same number of cubic feet provided by a Mega Bale:

One truckload of small package format	Number of 110 cu ft Mega Bales per t/l	Number of 135 cu ft Mega Bales per t/l	Savings per truckload *
660 - 3.8 cu ft comp. bales	23.1 Mega Bales	18.5 Mega Bales	\$2,320.00
1,254 - 2.8 cu ft loose-fill	17.5 Mega Bales	14 Mega Bales	\$3,870.00
44 - 80 cu ft loose-fill	17.6 Mega Bales	14 Mega Bales	\$4,650.00

*Prices are approximate grower prices for the Central U.S. Actual product selling prices vary by region, therefore savings will vary.

For the grower who orders five truckloads of the 2.8 cu ft PRO-MIX[®] BX MYCORRHIZAE[™], there is a savings of \$19,350 in the first year. Considering a large bale breaker costs about \$25,000, the return on investment would be less than 2 years.

Savings are not the only advantage of switching to the Mega Bales. Other advantages include:

- There is less waste for the 135 cu ft Mega Bale - 17% less plastic packaging and no shrink wrap and 4 pallets less to dispose of.
- All Mega Bales are sealed for outdoor storage, unlike other shrink-wrapped, tower bales.
- Less handling by employees – one bale is placed into the bale breaker vs. 57 - 2.8 cu ft bags or 30 - 3.8 cu ft compressed bales.
- Reduced worker lifting injuries – all movement of the Mega Bale is done by forklift.
- Less labor – one person is needed to place a Mega Bale into a bale breaker vs. two people having to place many smaller package sizes into the hopper of a bale breaker / flat filler.
- Reduced storage space needed. As seen in the chart above, 22 pallets of the 80 or 2.8 cu ft bags is equal to 14 pallets of the 135 cft Mega Bale and 22 pallets of the 3.8 cu ft compressed bales is equivalent to 18.5 Mega Bales.

Switching from Bark Mix to Peat Mix

Cost savings as seen above apply to bark-based growing medium too. Although some growers prefer bark mixes because they know how to use them, switching to a peat-based growing medium packaged in a Mega bale will save money. There will be some changes to growing practices when switching from a bark-based growing medium to a peat-based growing medium. These include:

- **Higher water retention.** Often bark-based growing medium have lower water retention, especially if they have a higher percentage of bark. Watering frequency must be reduced as a peat-based growing medium will dry out more slowly. There is less labor required to water crops grown in peat-based growing media.
- **No nitrogen tie-up.** In some cases, bark-based growing medium tie up nitrogen, so fertilizer application rates are often higher. Not so with a peat-based growing medium.
- **pH.** Limestone is added to the growing medium to raise the pH of acidic components, of which peat is the most acidic. Therefore, more limestone is often found in peat-based growing medium vs. bark-based growing medium.
- **Less weight.** Peat-based growing medium are lighter weight than bark-based growing medium. Handling crops will be easier as they are lighter in weight and may cost less to ship.

Most peat-based PRO-MIX® products are available in the Mega Bales formats.



PRO-MIX 135 cu ft Megabale Growing Medium

If you have any questions about saving with the Mega Bale formats and the availability of formulations, please contact your Premier Tech Sales Representative or Grower Services Representative: <https://www.pthorticulture.com/en/grower-services/>