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Vermiculite or Perlite

Perlite and vermiculite are both frequently found in potting mixes and soilless mediums. They have different benefits, and when mixing your own medium or amending your own soil, it is important to know which one to use based on your needs.

	Vermiculite	Perlite
What it is	A spongy brown silicate mineral with a fairly neutral pH	Porous particles of lightweight, expanded volcanic glass
What it does	Retains water in the soil, aids in soil aeration	Helps with soil drainage; retains water to a lesser extent than vermiculite
Advantages	Moisture Holding	Drainage, does not decompose and can be reused
Disadvantages	Can bog down soil	Can float to the top of soil
Best used for:	Seed germination Soilless growing mediums, Soil conditioner for water retention	Cactus, succulents, cutting propagation Soil aeration, adding drainage to clay soils, maintaining more consistent moisture