

Drainage layers and bioactive terrariums

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Drainage layers are the first step in a tropical planted bioactive terrarium, while not necessarily *needed* to provide a planted terrarium drainage layers do help provide ease of mind while catching excess water draining through the soil to prevent stagnation, bad bacteria and in most cases an *odor*. For paludariums the normal “go-to” is rocks or river stone. While giving you the natural look, it can be extremely heavy and bulky. Drainage layers also play an important role with allowing the plant roots to grow, disperse and become more prevalent in the soil. This is beneficial because it reinforces the symbiotic relationships as well as strengthen the presence of positive fungal and bacterial process’.

For drainage layers, we have three products created by the Dude that are lightweight but strong enough to support the weight of a planted terrarium on top. Allowing plants to take root through the porous material while providing adequate airflow through the layer to drain excess water and

keep the good bacteria growing, flourishing while providing your substrate the ability to properly aerate top to bottom. In a high humidity terrarium not having a drainage layer will lead to soil health issues and at times can cause harm to the inhabitants inside.

What is the difference between all of these drainage layers and their function? Lets find out.

HYDRO GROW

[Hydro Grow](#) was The Dude's first drainage product made with planted terrariums in mind. This 100% clay based natural product boasts a natural light color suited for high humidity animals while allowing a flat surface which can be used with or without a screen, although included in our kit. Packaged ready for use, The loose material helps drain the soil to keep plant roots from getting too soggy and rotting. (HydroGrow is not needed for Terra Firma, Terra Sahara or Terra Aranea bioactive substrates). This is also a great medium for culturing springtails directly and can be used as a sole substrate for calcium loving plants or neonatal dart frogs. When using HydroGrow it is important to never let the water level surpass the drainage level into your bioactive soil. If the water level becomes close, it is recommended to drain or siphon out excess ground (drained) water. For the HydroGrow to function properly a minimum depth of 0.5" is necessary.



HYDRO GROW V2

The Dude's new product designed to be even more lightweight than our Hydro Grow, [Hydro Grow V2](#) is a great option for your terrarium. Hydrogrow V2 needs to be used with the screen

included in the kit, the larger sized clay balls offer not only the same benefits as our Hydro Grow but a Natural dark color while preventing anaerobic water pockets. We recommend rinsing this product before use. (HydroGrow is not needed for Terra Firma, Terra Sahara or Terra Aranea bioactive substrates). It is very important to watch and maintain your water level with the HydroGrow V2. If water stands still long enough it may need to be drained to prevent any bad bacterial growth. You will also need to make sure that a screen divider is utilized to prevent your bioactive substrate from mixing with your HydroGrow V2 drainage layer. This is a great, inexpensive, lightweight option to use as a drainage medium for your bioactive terrariums and vivariums. For the HydroGrow V2 to function properly a minimum depth of 1.0" is necessary.



SUPER GROW

[Super Grow](#) is The Dudes material choice for paludariums giving you the strength to layer on top of the product without compression or disruption of air/water flow. Made of a dense but lightweight material able to be cut and sized to whatever you need, Super Grow is perfect for amphibious animals' water flow while gaining the natural biological filtration required for the paludarium. The level depth of the SuperGrow is dependent on the depth of the water or intricacy of your water feature. It is recommended to have at least a 2" water depth for any filter or pump to function. This would require at least 3" of SuperGrow to function properly. The unique material not only grows positive bacteria (as long as you keep the water clean) but it is a dark color which aids in the natural aspect of your bioactive paludarium. SuperGrow can also be used with any BioDude substrate for more unique type of builds. The Dude's utilizes the Terra Firma for larger builds and provides almost 12" of substrate. When using this much substrate a

small drainage layer is very helpful for long term health and aeration - thus, sometimes when using larger amounts of substrate the SuperGrow can be a great choice.

Overall, a drainage layer will help any keeper keep their bioactive terrarium healthy and functioning. The most important aspect is to never let your ground water (drainage water) go above the drainage layer into the substrate. If you are able to maintain that equilibrium within your vivarium a drainage layer can be your best friend to all of your plants and substrate. Still not sure which drainage layer is right for your Bioactive terrarium? Reach out to us at customercare@thebiodude.com or call us at 717 305 0684.