

## **GEG Meeting May 2022: Hypertufa!**

Hypertufa is a fun and creative way to give your outside or inside plants a different look, all your own! They make a wonderful and personal gift too! Hypertufa is a manufactured substitute for natural tufa, which is formed from limestone. It is very porous, making it a good medium for planters, better than clay pots.

Hypertufa pots can be left outdoors in the winter.

### **TOOLS AND MOLDS**

Plastic containers from the recycling bin and cardboard boxes lined with a plastic bag all work well as outer molds.

A smaller container to fit inside the larger one, or a second plastic bag filled with sand (to hold its shape) all work well for molds. Think about cutting the bottom section a few inches tall from a plastic juice container or the bottom half of a paper milk carton. Plastic pots from the nursery would great, just cover the bottom holes with tape before adding the hypertufa mixture.

For a first attempt, smaller is better!

#### **Also have on hand:**

a mixing tool such as an old cooking spoon, sturdy paint stick, etc.

cooking spray

plastic grocery bags

sand

large container for mixing Hypertufa

small container for pouring water

protective disposable gloves

old clothes

face mask

container to measure dry ingredients

(doesn't have to be a standard measuring cup)

### **RECIPE**

Hypertufa is easily mixed as follows: remember “p-p-p”!

**IMPORTANT:** Wear protective gloves and a face mask

when working with cement powder!

In a large basin or bucket, combine with your hands:

1 part **Portland** cement

1 part **peat moss** or coir

1 part **Perlite** or vermiculite

When all the dry ingredients are well combined, add

water in small amounts. For example, if using 2 cups of **each** of the above dry ingredients, 2 cups of water may be enough, **but** add gradually to see. The mixture should come together when squeezed in the palm of your hand. You can always add water if it is too dry.

Spray the inside of your mold with cooking spray; begin to add the hypertufa mixture by small handfuls, pressing into the bottom first. The bottom should be 1-2” in depth. You can form a drainage hole at this time if you like. Once the bottom is filled, add the inner mold, sprayed on the outside, being sure it is centered (or where you want it) and start adding the hypertufa mixture to fill in the sides. Tap the container on the table or with a small mallet to to remove air bubbles. If using a plastic bag of sand for an inner mold, fill the bottom of the mold first, add the plastic bag and sand, working on building the sides of your planter.

Cover your hypertufa project with a plastic grocery bag or other plastic bag and let it sit, indoors, undisturbed for 48 hours. After 48 hours, remove the inner and outer molds. The mixture will still be damp. This is when you can add some texture with a wire brush, skewer, screwdriver, or other tool to give the outside of the pot a texture or design, if you like. Add a drainage hole(s). You can make changes to the upper edges if needed such as leveling or smoothing.

Wrap the pot in a plastic bag again and allow it to cure for 3-4 weeks.  
Patience!

Once totally dry, the container will take on a lighter gray appearance. Rinse the interior with a white vinegar solution (one part vinegar to 9 parts water), let dry, and you are ready to plant!!!

There are many good *YouTube* videos with great ideas for creating with hypertufa!