Urban Farming System with Biogro soil granulates

In short

Urban farming is a rising movement which is promoted by a young generation of farmers and ecoconcious people. The goal is to produce vegetables in an urban environment with the smallest possible CO₂ footprint. The main challenges for urban farming are the limited space and the lack of natural gardening soil (due to sealing or contamination). Biogro soil granulate is the solution for these problems and perfect for more urban farming projects.

Content:

- Challenges of urban farmers
- How Biogro meets the challenges
- Products
- Packaging
- Distribution
- Target groups
- Marketing

Solution

The **challenges** are as mentioned above:

- Limited space for seedling production (indoors, greenhouses)
- Limited natural gardening soil
- Limited space for growing
- Reduction of CO₂ footprint

Biogro soil granulate is the **perfect ingredient**:

- Small: can be stored in limited space
- Light: makes transportation (by bike, to balconies or rooftops) easier
- Seedlings: Seeds start in a single pellet (e. g. on a windowsill) seedlings are transplanted to a 0.05 l coco fibre pot filled with biogro soil granulate when they are bigger they are transplanted to bigger pots (0.5 l) later they are transplanted in beds or containers (again filled with biogro soil granulate)
- Growing containers are used on sealed surfaces or contaminated areas found in cities. Planted containers filled with biogro soil granulate can be positioned everywhere (e. g. balconies, paved ground, in front of cafes or shops, on rooftops, unused industrial areas)
- Biogro soil granulate can be used for rooftop gardens or vertical growing systems. Vertical growing systems can be used for example for herbs, greens or strawberries. Pots of herbs stand on a stair like construction. The herbs can be directly seeded in the pots.
- The biogro soil granulate can be stored at the end of the season (dried and compressed) and reused in the next year (nutrients may have to be added)
- Sprouts are the vitamin source in winter. They need soil which can be reused for several batches.

Products

A range of different products can be either bought in a package or as single modules

- Packages
 - Complete package: contains seeds, starting pellets, coco fiber pots and soil granulate to grow the seedlings, soil granulate to fill a container to grow the vegetables or herbs with the right amount of fertilizer
 - Seedling starting packages: contains seeds, starting pellets, coco fiber pots and soil granulate to grow the seedlings (different sizes to transplant)
 - Customized Packages: customer chooses the kinds of vegetable/herb seeds, starting pellets, coco fibre pots and soil granulate are added as needed for the plants, soil granulate for containers if requested

All packages come with a detailed description of how to use the products and grow the selected seeds (exact timings, temperature, light, irrigation). When and where to plant the seedlings, how much water they need, when the vegetables/herbs/fruits can be harvested and how they are used. Additional information about products for irrigation, trellising, small greenhouses etc. is provided.

- Modules
 - Seeds: high quality organic seeds e. g. Bingenheimer Saatgut, Dreschflegel (Germany), Reinsaat (Austria)
 - Seed starting pellets: like the swelling pellets (Quelltabletten) but smaller (1 cm³)
 - Soil granulate: without and with different fertilization (low, middle, high)
 - Coir pots: square shaped pots can be placed closer, for example in boxes. Different sizes for growing seedlings from 0.05 l to 0.5 l with thin walls.
 - Organic fertilizer: to mix with unfertilized soil granulate (for custom needs), to refertilize soil from the last season
 - Additional products: irrigation, trellis, containers, plant labels, plant trays (optimal sizes for the pots), small greenhouses (for windowsills)
- For different uses biogro soil granulate can be differently pre-fertilized:
 - Little fertilizer: to start seedlings
 - Low fertilized: for greens, herbs, sprouts
 - Middle fertilized: for vegetables like carrots, chard, beans, peas
 - High fertilized: for fruit vegetables (tomatoes), cabbage, strawberries

Packaging

- Bulk selling of pots, soil granulate, fertilizer (at fairs, in franchising shops)
- Cardboard packaging with thin plastic to avoid moisture
- Natural cardboard with green printing
- Packages in paper bags (in shops), cardboard boxes for shipping

Distribution

- Web shop
- Marked stands at gardening fairs
- Garden centers
- Urban gardening shops (franchising)
- Local coco soil communities

Target groups

- Urban gardeners
- Hobby gardeners
- Semi-professional producers (in an urban environment)
- Eco-conscious consumers

Those people live all on the edge to environmental perfection. They want to make a change in this world, away from non-renewable resources (like peat) and are aware of influences on the climate change.

The different products are tailor-made for the different target groups. Packages are for beginners and the single modules are for more professional growers with differing needs. They can still get all needed products from one distributor.

Marketing

The marketing builds on the environmental benefits of the coconut products, the offered packages and the whole urban farming movement.

By supporting non-profit and community building projects in the urban farming movement, the company and the products get known in the scene. Those projects are glad about every support they get and therefore will promote the products to a broader public. A lot still happens by word-to-mouth recommendation (also on blogs).

Furthermore, being mentioned in articles on relevant websites and publishing advertisement there, is an important way of getting known.

Cooperation with research institutes or universities, results in experiments that help to improve the product and show the advantages. These results are posted on websites and the web shop.

Local coco soil communities are formed. They can order big amounts of biogro soil granulate for special prices and also resell products. In those groups knowledge about growing with the soil granulate is shared and even the produced vegetables can be shared through the network. Coco soil can be reused within the network, for example if soil was used for sprouts it can afterwards still be used in growing containers or on rooftops.