

## The Headline: "EPA warns gardeners about handling vermiculite".

Quote: "The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is warning consumers not to handle one specific garden product containing vermiculite, and to treat all similar products as if they are contaminated with cancer-causing asbestos "

The Details: One vermiculite product called Zonolite which was used for building insulation has been found to contain fibrous actinolite and tremolite which are both classified as carcinogens. A vermiculite mine in Libby, MT was closed because workers exposed to tremolite asbestos fibers developed several fatal diseases. A class-action lawsuit is currently pending against the company. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper reported that the EPA has found "asbestos in several brands of garden products." Testing also showed that "using these products caused asbestos fibers to be released into the air where they could be inhaled."

Zonolite brand attic insulation was sometimes used in growing media in the past because of its coarse texture. It was never intended to be sold for that purpose, however, but the Seattle paper found that bags were still for sale in garden and hardware stores in the Puget Sound area.

Commercial growing media producers have been using a completely different source of vermiculite for many years that has been shown to be free of asbestos contaminants (Figure 1). If you or your workers are concerned, contact your supplier, who will be happy to provide safety information (see sidebar).

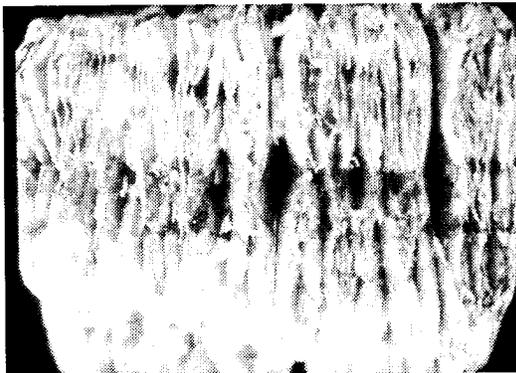


Figure 1 - Vermiculite is a common component of growing media.

The latest newspaper article states that asbestos particles have been found in children's coloring crayons. We'll keep you informed as more facts become known.

### Statement on Vermiculite by the Scotts Company

Consumers may be receiving erroneous and misleading information regarding the safety of gardening products that contain vermiculite. Allegations have been made that some products containing vermiculite may contain asbestos.

We want you to be assured that the Scotts Company's products meet the highest standards of safety and effectiveness.

All Scotts products, including those containing vermiculite, are subjected to thorough testing by government regulatory agencies, raw material suppliers, internal quality control and independent testing services before they are placed on the market. These include tests by the EPA and OSHA.

The Scotts Company is built on a 132-year reputation of product integrity, and consumer trust. Our products containing vermiculite meet all safety standards. Based on extensive testing, there are no detectable levels of asbestos in Scotts products containing vermiculite.

Should you have further questions or concerns, please contact:  
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