

February 25, 2011

Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd.  
Sumirin Agro-Products Co., Ltd.

### **Sumirin Agro-Products to Launch *Karuido***

#### **60% Lighter than Conventional Rice Seedling Growing Media**

—Next-Generation Lightweight Growing Medium Specially Designed to Save Time and Energy—

Sumirin Agro-Products Co., Ltd. (Head Office: Tobishima-mura, Ama-gun, Aichi Prefecture; President: Ryo Soda), a wholly-owned agricultural subsidiary of Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. (Head Office: 3-2 Otemachi 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; President and Representative Director: Akira Ichikawa), has developed *Karuido*, a growing medium for rice seedlings (patent pending), and will commence sales of the new product on March 1.

*Karuido* uses granular activated carbon and a recycled material made by expanding residential glass scraps at high temperatures using a newly developed manufacturing process. The new product delivers an exceptionally light weight, about 60% less than conventional red-soil-type rice seedling growing media. At the same time, it is a revolutionary product in terms of its superior moisture retention, permeability, aeration, and nutrient retention qualities, allowing for the production of healthy, high-quality seedlings. Sumirin Agro-Products aims to sell 300 tons of the product by the transplanting season in late May.

#### ■ Features

- Employs lightweight expanded glass pieces, boasting roughly 60% less weight than conventional growing media, with superior permeability and aeration performance.
- Won't clog equipment when sowing seed, due to its containing expanded glass pieces and granular activated carbon.
- Has high soil nutrient retention due to the highly porous structure of activated carbon, extending the life of fertilizer to about 40 days.
- Facilitates faster seed germination and root growth than conventional growing media, shortening the growing period and saving labor.
- Requires no extra equipment, since work with a transplanting machine can be performed in the same way as seedlings grown with conventional growing media.

- Product Development Background

As Japanese farmers grow older, they are becoming increasingly reluctant to use red-soil-type rice seedling growing media, which consist primarily of heavy mountain soil. Also, supplies of mountain soil may grow scarce when considering the environmental impacts posed by its extraction. A rice seedling growing medium that is lightweight, promises a sustainable supply, and uses environmentally friendly materials is needed.

Product Outline

Name	<i>Karuido</i>
Launch Date	March 1, 2011; sales area to expand incrementally thereafter
Sales Area	Nationwide (not including Okinawa)
Packaging Types	40-liter plastic bag and 1m <sup>3</sup> flexible container bag
Price	Open pricing

- *Karuido*



Product packaging (40-liter bag)

*Karuido*, with expanded glass pieces and granular activated carbon

- Business Activities of Sumirin Agro-Products

Sumirin Agro-Products has long committed itself to the development of a more affluent society through the provision of sustainable farming, gardening, and greening materials that make special use of recycled materials.

Its core product, *Tsuchitaro*, a growing medium for farms and gardens that utilizes sludge products from water purification processes, is the preferred product of farmers throughout Japan for growing seedlings for tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers, melons, and other produce. *Tsuchitaro* is a longtime

bestseller, with over 200,000m<sup>3</sup> (approximately 150,000 tons) sold over the quarter century that has passed since its original release.

**Outline of Sumirin Agro-Products Co., Ltd.**

Established: March 1973

President: Ryo Soda

Capital: 3 million yen (wholly-owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd.)

Annual Revenue: 8.03 million yen (for year ended March 31, 2010)

Head Office: 2-59 Kiba, Tobishima-mura, Ama-gun, Aichi Prefecture

Production locations: Tobishima Head Office Plant, Sakura Plant, Shinshiro Plant

Number of Employees: 38 (as of April, 2010)

Business Activities: Production and sale of organic compost and organic fertilizer; production and sale of growing media; production and sale of home gardening products