Sustainable Growing Media

A UK Manufacturer’s Perspective

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International Association of Horticultural Producers
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Production Sites
Peat substitutes: the search goes on.

Report says councils want peat-free plants.

Pressure for peat-free

SPOTLIGHT FALLS ON PEAT-FREES

News that work has just started at HI! Eddy to evaluate the latest reduced peat and peat-free composts as alternative mixes to standard peat-based materials for bedding plant production coincides with our round-up of the market.

Compost makers rush to be environmentally friendly

Fisons under further pressure from conservationists

Anti-peat protesters may target Chelsea

Bogged down

As eco-warriors protest about peat, researchers look for an alternative

Bord na Mona forgo £1 million profit in peat bog hand-over

SHOULD YOU BUY PEAT?
Drivers for Change in the UK – Biodiversity

- **1970s - 80s**: First calls from conservationists for peatland protection
- **1990**: Peatland Protection Consortium created to raise awareness
- **1991**: Major UK retailer B&Q specifies against peat from Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- **1995**: First government target set – for peat to be reduced to 40% by 2005
- **1999**: UK Biodiversity Action Plan - additional target for “90% of the total market for soil improver and growing media to be peat free in the UK by 2010”
Drivers for Change in the UK – Climate Change

- **2008** Climate Change Act commits UK government to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2050

- **2012** Planning policy framework restricts new sites or extensions to existing sites for peat extraction and

- **2011** Natural Environment White Paper Voluntary phase-out targets 2020 for amateur gardeners and 2030 for professional growers

- **2011** Sustainable Growing Media Task Force created and work soon begins on the Responsible Sourcing Scheme
25 Year Environment Plan (2018)

- Reconfirmed 2020 and 2030 peat phase-out targets

- New: ‘If by 2020 we have not seen sufficient movement to peat alternatives, we will look at introducing further measures.’

“Peat in compost could be banned under new plans to boost the government’s drive to reach Net Zero by 2050, due be announced by Environment Secretary George Eustice next week.”
Bord na Móna ends peat harvesting

15 January 2021, Horticulture Week

Irish peat board Bord na Móna has told staff and unions it is stopping harvesting peat.

Bord na Móna has stopped peat harvesting for good. In 2020, planning issues meant the harvest season was suspended. New planning and consent applications ready for submission are now not going ahead.
Non-peat ingredients

• Wood fibre - extruded
  - composted
• Bark
• Coir
• Green Compost
Total volume of ingredients used in 2019 (4.49M m³)

UK

- Peat
- Green compost
- Bark
- Spent mushroom compost
- Soil/loam
- Coir
- Woodfibre
- Other organic
- Other mineral
- Total volume of ingredients used in 2019 (4.49M m³)
% Peat sold in UK between 2011 and 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail %</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional %</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>100</td>
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- 2.8M m³ in 2020
- 2.3M m³ in 2011
Will demand outstrip supply?

In 2019:

- Total volume UK gm  4.5 million m³
- Total volume peat  2.1 million m³
Will demand outstrip supply?

• Competing industries

• 440,000 tpa wood chip (1million m³)

• to one 44mW biomass power station

• *But* useful by-products can arise
Are peat alternatives more expensive?

Is peat too cheap?
Responsible Sourcing Scheme

the ‘promise'

“All growing media are made from raw materials that are sourced and manufactured in a way that is both socially and environmentally responsible.”
Responsibility Criteria

1. Energy use
2. Water use
3. Social compliance
4. Habitat and biodiversity
5. Pollution
6. Renewability
7. Resource use efficiency
We source from around 100 UK forests at any one time.

Sawmills – we buy from up to 24.

Raw bark goes to 3 processing sites.

We manufacture growing media at one site in Glos.
Energy

Example: total energy across supply chain = 52 kWh/m³ = score 8

Do you use any energy from fossil fuel (including electricity, diesel, etc)?

- N: 20
- Y: How much energy from non-renewable sources do you use (average annual in kWh/m³)

- 0.1 – 4.0 kWh/m³: 18
- 4.1 – 8.0 kWh/m³: 16
- 8.1 – 17 kWh/m³: 14
- 17.1 – 26 kWh/m³: 12
- 26.1 – 46 kWh/m³: 10
- 46.1 – 100 kWh/m³: 8
- 100.1 – 166 kWh/m³: 6
- 166.1 – 239 kWh/m³: 5
- 239.1 – 319 kWh/m³: 4
- 319.1 – 406 kWh/m³: 3
- 406.1 – 500 kWh/m³: 2
- >500 kWh/m³: 1
Off-setting with renewables
Renewability

- Renewable at the same site within 100 years?
  - Y
  - N
    - Renewable at the same site within 50 years?
      - Y
        - Renewable at the same site within 5 years?
          - Y
          - N
            - Renewable at the same site within 1000 years?
              - Y
              - N
                - 1
              - 6
            - 1
          - 15
        - 17
      - 20
    - 1

0-5 = red (worst practice)
18-20 = green (best practice)
Draft labels

RESPONSIBILITY INDEX

The horticultural industry is working together to create responsibly sourced composts and soil mixes which lower potential impact on the environment.

INGREDIENTS:
TBC.

Grade A demonstrates the lowest impact to the environment while Grade E has the highest impact.

For further information, please visit: growingmedia.co.uk/responsible-sourcing.html

See more details at www.growingmedia.co.uk
First national UK retailer to go close to peat-free

11 December 2020, Horticulture Week

The UK's biggest garden centre group Dobbies is stopping selling almost all its bagged peat composts.

Aiming to be 90% peat-free by the end of 2021

Britain's biggest compost seller set to end own brand bagged peat sales

17 December 2020, Horticulture Week

Britain's biggest DIY/garden centre chain B&Q is set to phase out own brand bagged peat growing media sales by the end of 2021.

B&Q sells an estimated £60m of bagged growing media a year.