



# Sustainable Growing Media

## A UK Manufacturer's Perspective

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International Association of Horticultural Producers









Melcourt  
Production Sites







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Julie Aspinall and Stovin Hayter examine the recent developments in the quest for peat-free growing media

## Report says councils want peat-free plants

[illegible]

# ons under further pressure om conservationists

[illegible]

garden centres to provide alternatives to peat. The RGS has vowed to continue its campaign with protests throughout the spring gardening season.

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

Grown-ups of ornamentals are still coming under pressure to convert to peat-free products, though the issue is no longer microscopic, writes Sarah W.

**Bogge**

As eco-warrior researchers lo

Environmental campaigners are to step up pressure on garden centres to push alternatives to peat, and have vowed to continue with protests through the spring gardening season.

There is growing speculation that the organisation is planning to target gardeners visiting the Chelsea Flower Show next month.

...in the whole. It's not just a  
...under the way. Growers will not  
...to someone says they have to  
...growth and development of interna-  
...they way to change. First I had lagging  
...replaced in cucumber, tomato and  
...over production of Europe, because  
...production after better performance  
...phenomenon (plant production)  
...and development of plant replace-  
...ment work in plant production  
...sponsored also, with much benefit  
...improvement by the plant companies  
...is, is largely unanalyzed

...students have also done trials  
...the information pulled together  
...and information of research into  
...As well as performance, price is also an  
...issue. "Profit is so cheap at the moment  
...and there is fierce competition in the  
...market. For any alternative to compete  
...it has to compete with prices which  
...are already rock bottom," says Huis-  
...Although some paid feed costs are  
...comparable to the cost of higher grade  
...feed, I don't think the cost of higher grade  
...needs to be taken into account. "Current  
...profit estimations might be more difficult  
...water or more money than to feeding  
...they might have a shorter shelf life or ex-  
...in a higher grade and with more losses in re-

100  
For Scotland Week

facturers felt over themselves to be seen as environmentally friendly.

The William Sinclair takeover of Cadbury's group on the Friday prior to Glaxo has catapulted the Lincoln-based group to the forefront of the non-past-tensopast manufacturers.

Since they also launched a new growing program based on timber-

[illegible][illegible]

rest about peat,  
r an alternative

Individual nurseries have also done trials. Here is the information pulled together from government funding of research into alternatives in small:

Peat is so cheap at the moment for any fence competition in the world or any alternative to compete with a rock bottom," says Holmes.

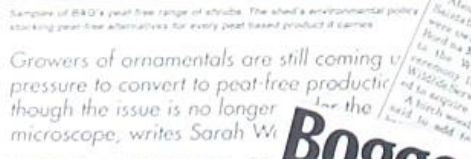
Some peat free composts are to the cost of higher grade and the loss of material that might be more difficult to find.

Peat might be more difficult to find, a shorter shelf life or result out with more losses in ex-

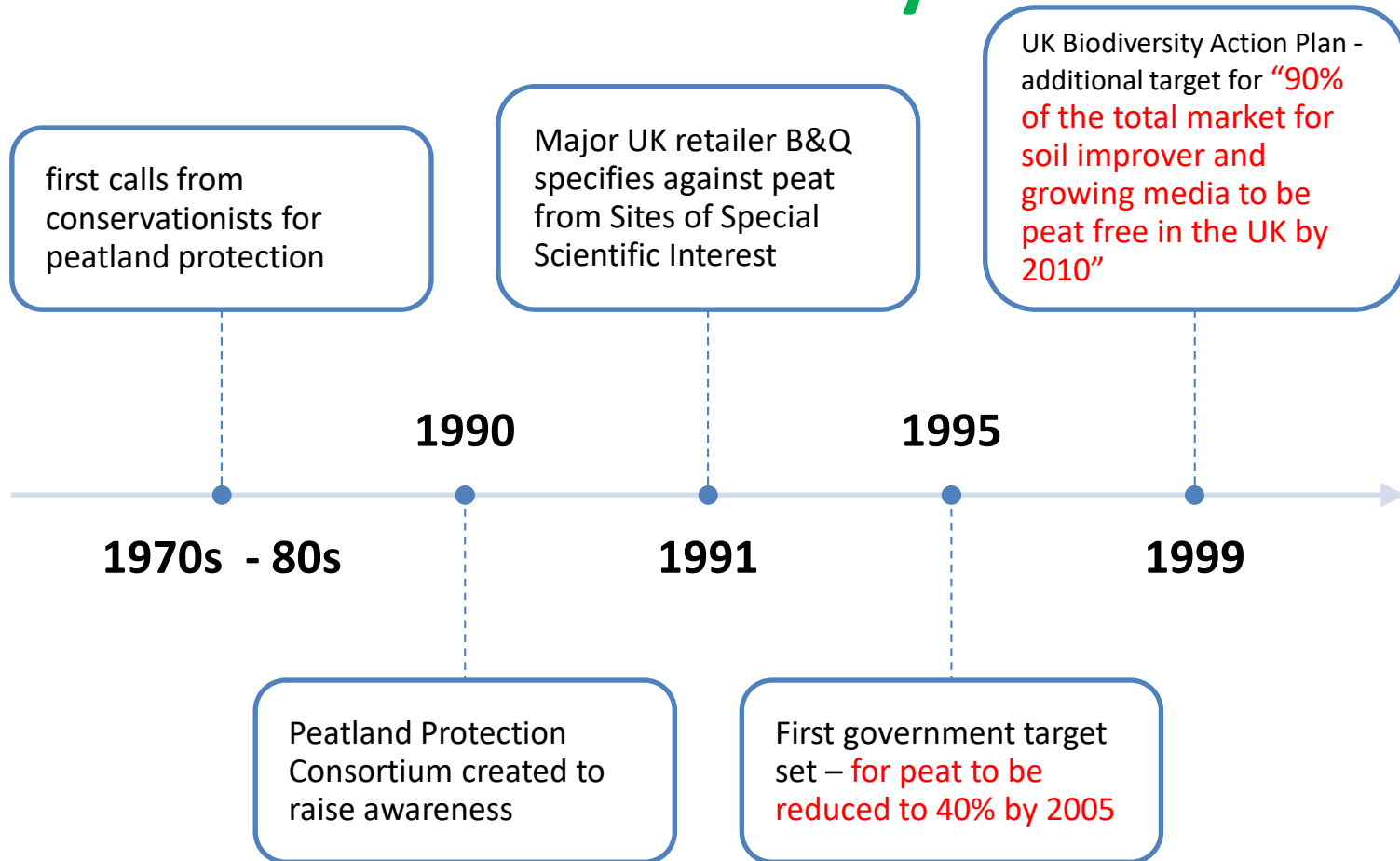
**PEAT**

**SHOULD YOU BUY PEAT**

Northcliffe Press



# Drivers for Change in the UK – Biodiversity



# 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.'**



Excerpt from press release from UK Government  
16<sup>th</sup> May 2021

“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.

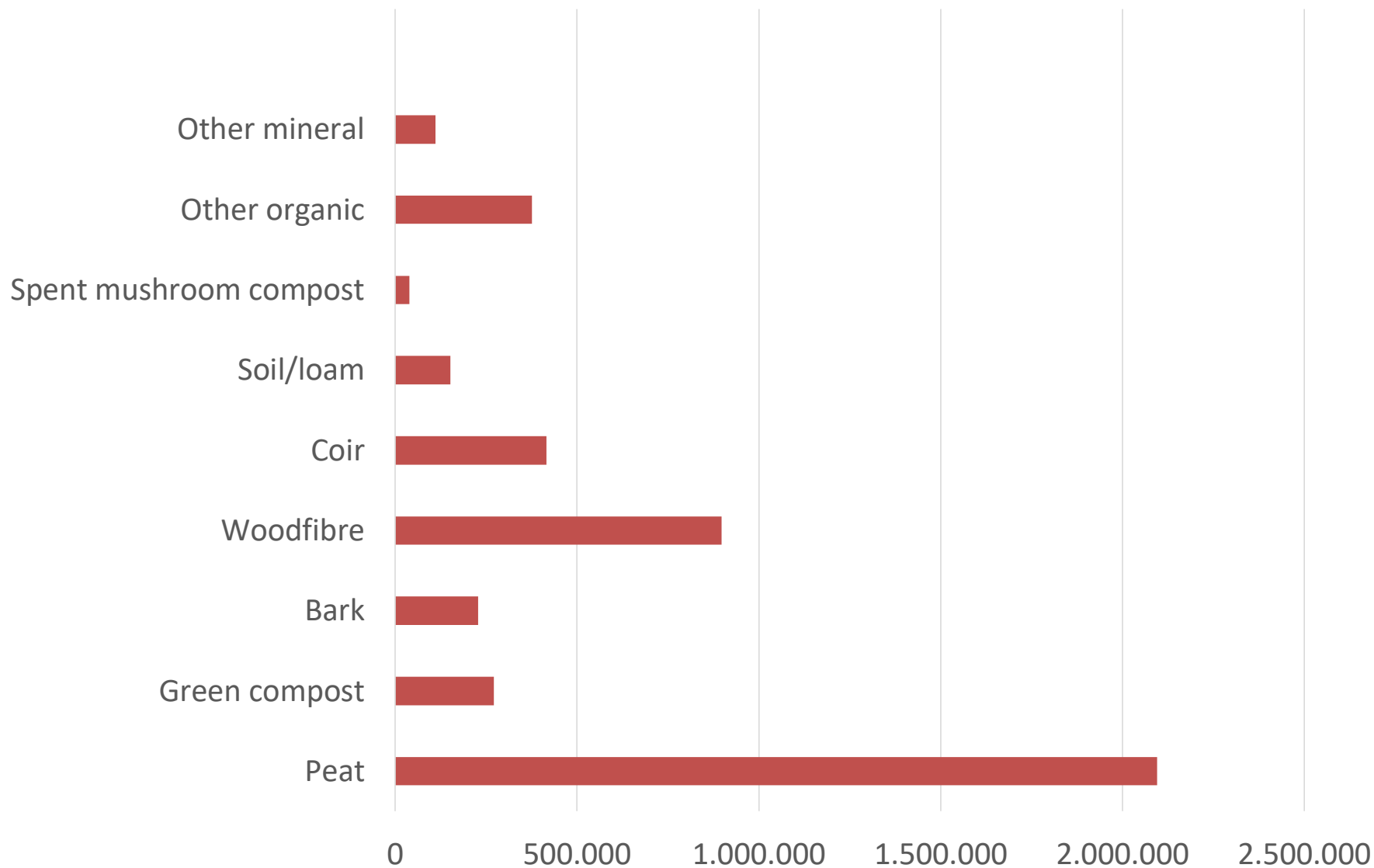
Bord na Móna has stopped peat harvesting for good. In 2020, planning issues meant the harvest season was suspended. New planning and consent applications ready for submission are now not going ahead.



# Non-peat ingredients

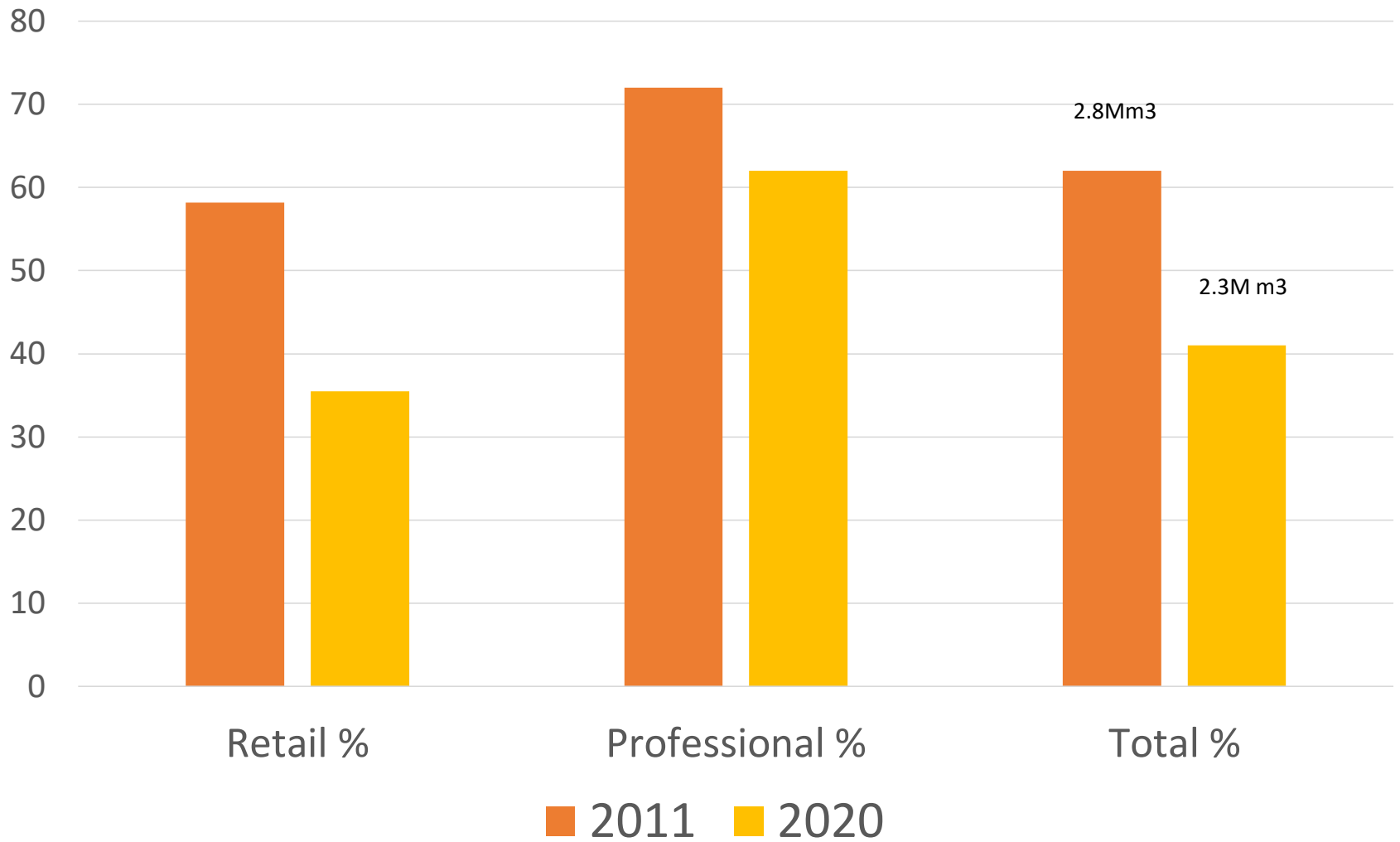
- Wood fibre - extruded  
- composted
- Bark
- Coir
- Green Compost

# Total volume of ingredients used in 2019 (4.49M m3) UK





## % Peat sold in UK between 2011 and 2020





















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# 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 m<sup>3</sup>)
- 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.”

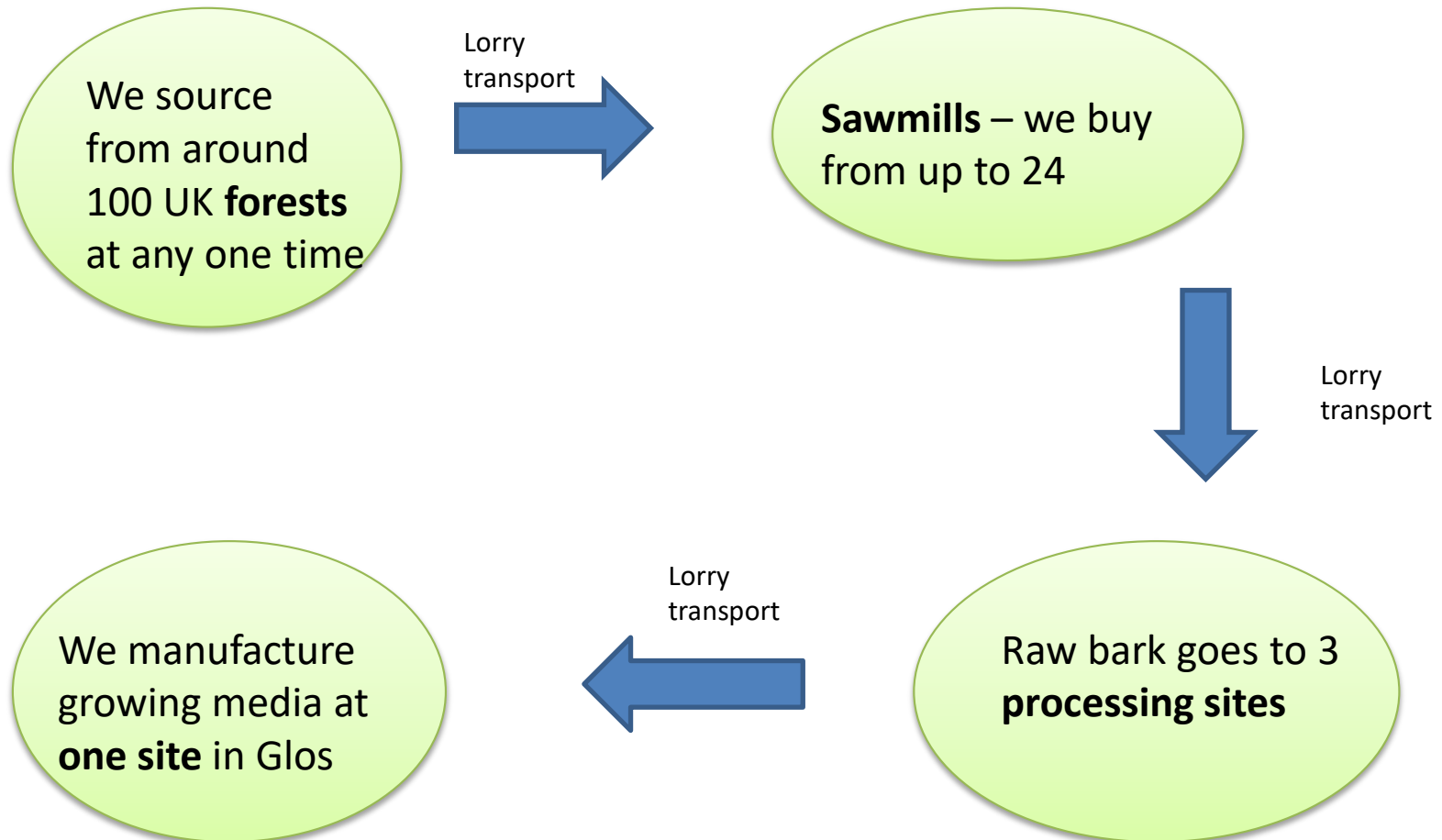
# Responsibility Criteria

1. Energy use
2. Water use
3. Social compliance
4. Habitat and biodiversity
5. Pollution
6. Renewability
7. Resource use efficiency



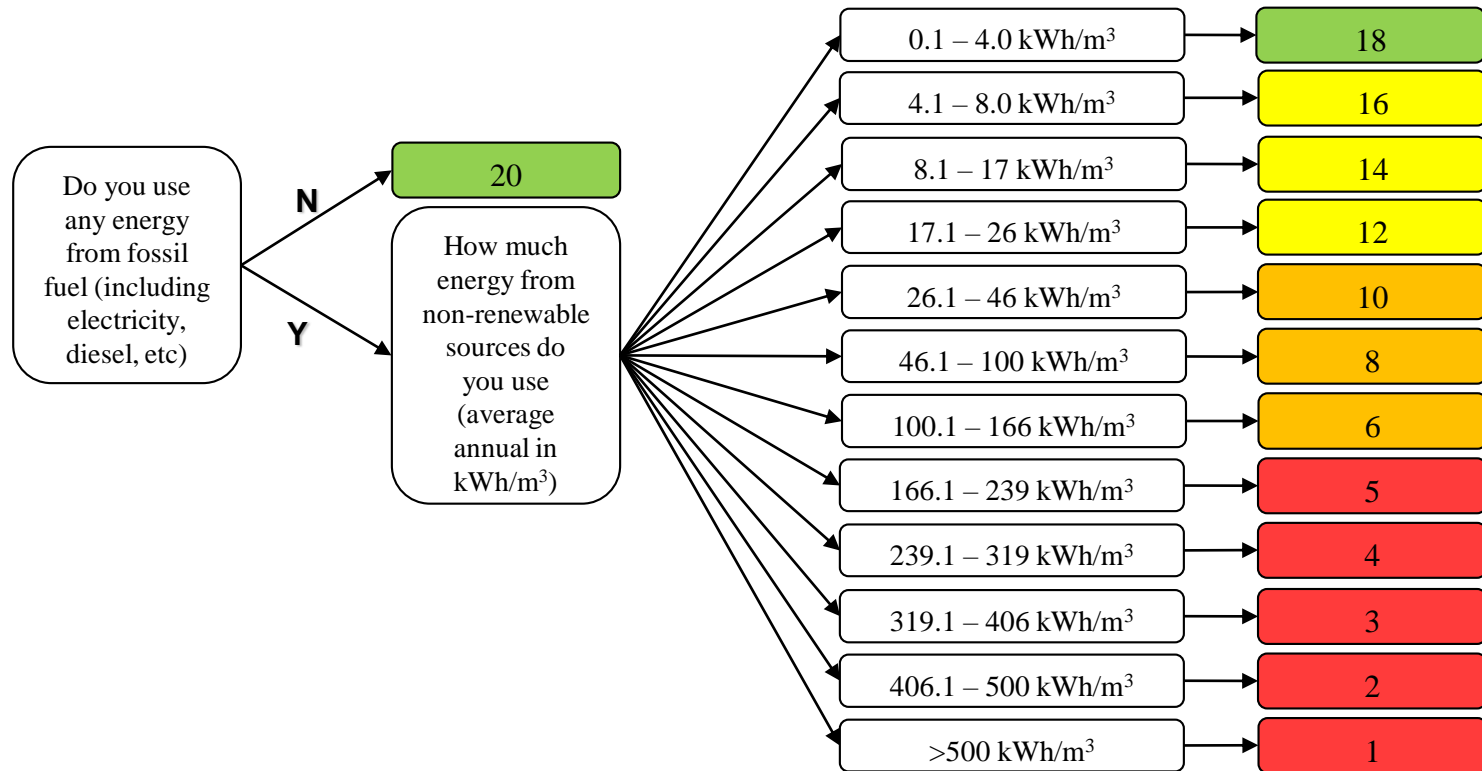


# Bark (Melcourt) Supply Chain



# Energy

Example: total energy across supply chain = 52 kWh/m<sup>3</sup> = score 8

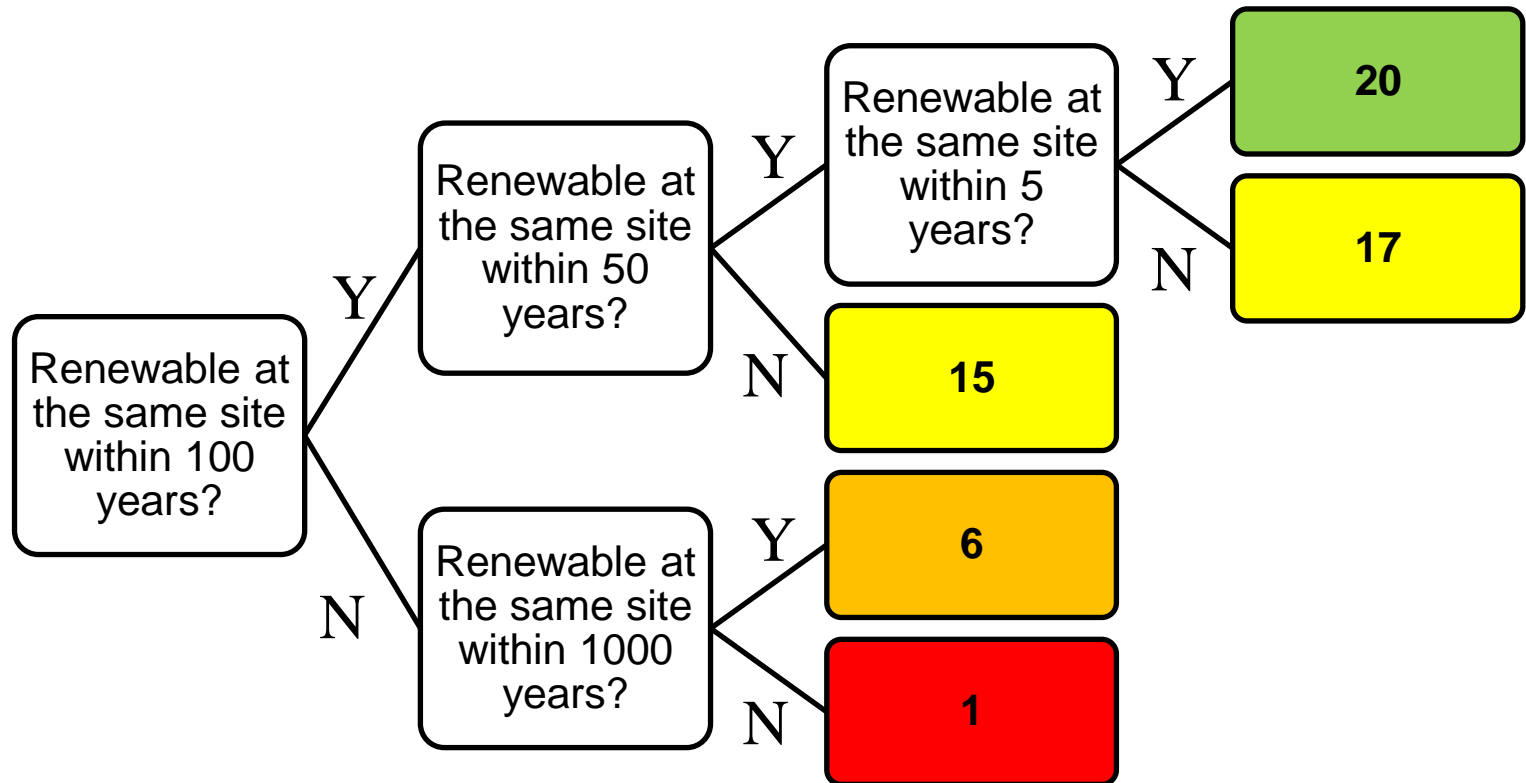




# Off-setting with renewables



# Renewability



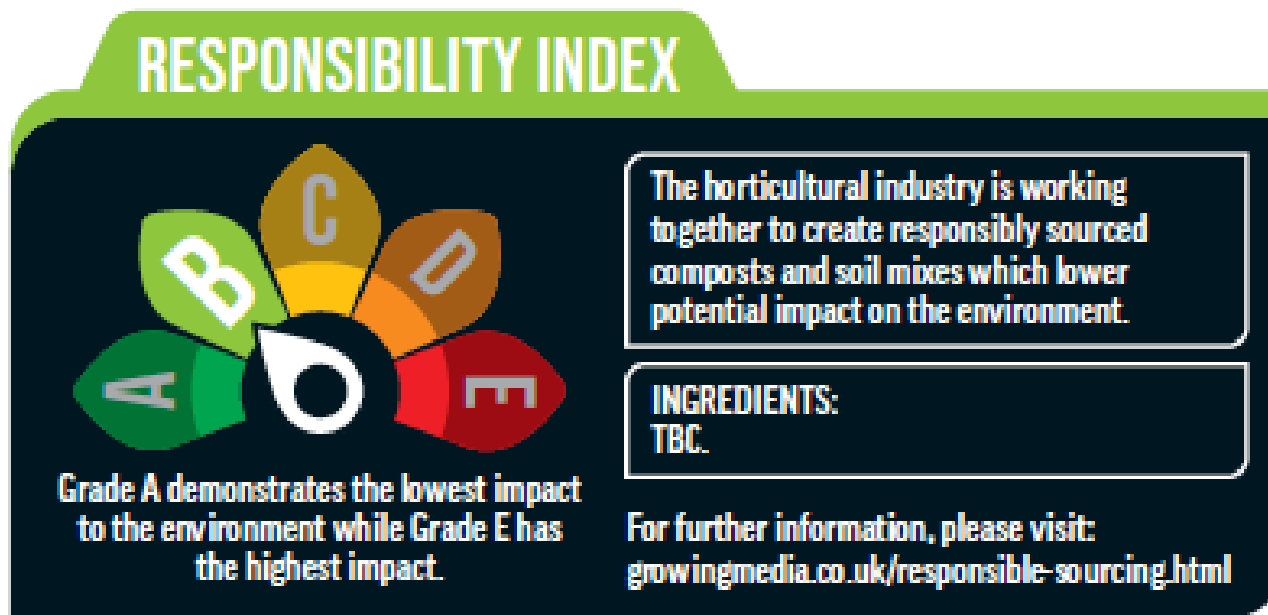
0-5 = red (worst practice)

18-20 = green (best practice)





Draft labels



See more details at [www.growingmedia.co.uk](http://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.



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