

Peat use in UK horticulture



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UK: use of resources 2012

- Total growing media used ~ 3.9 million m³ (weather)
- Total peat use ~ 2.2 million m³
 - Amateur market:
 - 1.4 million m³ peat (1.3 m m³ p-free)
 - Commercial growers:
 - 0.8 million m³ peat (0.4 m m³ p-free)



Source: AHDB, HTA and Defra.
2012. Tracking peat usage in
growing media production.

Peat sources for UK horticulture (2012)

	million m ³
England	0.36
Wales	0
Scotland	0.26
NI	0.21
Rol	1.16
Other EU	0.26



Source: AHDB, HTA and Defra. 2012. Tracking peat usage in growing media production.

Principal peat-free materials used (2012)

- Coir 8%
- Composted / aged bark 8%
- Wood fibre 14%
- Composted green waste (green compost) 9%
- Soil / loam 2%



Manufacturers (UK market)

- Sited on / near bogs
- Historical investment
- Financial return
- Sustainable business?
 - Harvesting
- Some companies are moving operations
 - Proximity to market?
 - Proximity to other resources?



Consumers & Retailers

- Consumer choice
 - Price (61%)
 - Bag contents (67%)
- Retailer choice editing?
- Quality control
 - Retailer confidence
 - Amateur users
 - Professional users
- Cost



Government

- White Paper June 2011
 - Voluntary peat-free targets (England only):
 - 2015 all government contract
 - 2020 all retail (hobby) products
 - 2030 all commercial horticulture
- Defra
 - Established industry/NGO “task force” (now the Growing Media Panel)
 - Working groups established within the GMP
 - Road map established



Project 4: What do RESPONSIBLE growing media look like?

- Work in progress
- Outset:
 - All stakeholders (growers, retailers, manufacturers, NGO's etc)
 - Practical & simple
 - Robust & meaningful
 - “Spirit” of the scheme
 - Reflects what “we” regard as responsibility (we are not responsibility experts)
 - “Consumer promise”



The “Aspiration”

- “Make horticultural production in the UK more sustainable”
- Reduce reliance on any one substrate
- Differentiate a more responsible product from a less responsible one
- Compare same material from different sources
- Trying to account for innovation, eg recycling / energy capture etc
- Encourage positive change in the supply chain



Responsibility Criteria To Date

1. Energy use (in extraction, transport and production)
2. Water use (in extraction, processing and manufacturing)
3. Social compliance
4. Habitat and biodiversity (impact of gaining the materials)
5. Pollution (effluents as a result of production processes, not fuel use)
6. Renewability (feedstock material)
7. Resource use efficiency (source of material and waste generated in processing)



Europe

- Concern re transferring environmental footprint
- Disadvantaging UK growers?
- Conversations with EPAGMA
 - “Responsible use of peat in horticulture”
 - Philosophically different



Where are we at?

- Ongoing work
- Crude in places
- Industry led
- Not directly peat-free but it will encourage movement away
- Choice editing mechanism?
- Consumer facing?
- Food crops?



“The Promise”

- **All growing media¹ are made from raw materials² that are sourced³ and manufactured⁴ in a way that is both socially and environmentally responsible⁵.**
1. Substrate at the point of being mixed but not bagged, excluding need for consideration of packaging, transport from the manufacturer to the retailer (or direct to the customer), transport by the customer from the retailer, use by the customer and disposal and decomposition.
 2. Including all bulk ingredients (organic and inorganic)
 3. To cover the processing of the raw materials up to the point of arriving at the growing media manufacturer.
 4. To cover the processing of the raw materials from arrival at the growing media manufacturer to the point of being mixed but not bagged, e.g. processing of wood chips into wood fibre, etc.
 5. Economics and price dealt with by the market. As we are not covering that pillar of sustainability using the term responsible rather than sustainable.