



Peatland Workshop - 21st February 2014

Overview of peat extraction and use

This workshop explored peat extraction for horticultural use and the suitability and availability of alternatives. We considered the current situation and what additional strategy and policy might be required. We then determined what LINK could take forward in terms of an advocacy strategy and where there might be a role for other organisations.

Background

In our Benchmark for the Challenge 2020 Scottish Biodiversity Strategy refresh we offered two measures that would determine whether the strategy was making a difference on peat use.

1. Phase out peat use by public bodies completely by 2015
2. Annul all extant commercial peat extraction rights by 2020 (either by revocation, management agreement or outright purchase)

The first target represents a very small proportion (around 1%) of total peat use in the UK. Of the 3 million cubic metres of peat that are sold for horticultural use every year in the UK, the majority (69%) is used by amateur gardeners, with a further 33% used by industry.

In Scotland, there are 23 active commercial peat extraction sites and 21 sites with dormant commercial peat extraction rights.

The workshop considered five areas:

- Peat use by home gardeners
- Peat use by professional gardeners
- Peat retailers
- Peat suppliers
- Carrots and Sticks (i.e. incentives/disincentives)

What can LINK do?

		Who?
Home use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target a proportion of new MSP Species Champions to species associated with peat. Consider wider 'Peat Champions' such as celebrities, public figures, etc. • Suggest LINK member bodies contribute awareness raising articles to gardening magazines. 	Wildlife Forum All
Professional use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push for local authorities, other public bodies, formal gardens, etc., to go peat free. • Influence Procurement Bill to introduce 'no peat' policy 	Wildlife Forum ???
Retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to the consultation on the National Peatland Plan • LINK members to raise awareness and promote best practice amongst retailers. 	Wildlife Forum All
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push for equivalent to English White Paper commitments to phase out peat use, but ensure that the targets are mandatory rather than voluntary. 	Wildlife Forum
Carrots & Sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for a levy on sales of peat. Money raised could be used to fund research and development for sustainable growing media. 	Wildlife Forum

What can other organisations do?

		Who?
Home use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at growbag labelling and see if a standard could be developed • Work with Soil Association and others on labelling of vegetables and plants that have been grown in sustainable growing media. • Assess whether there is scope to challenge misleading labelling through Consumer protection law • Promotion to raise demand for peat alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote case studies - Promote alternative products - Peat-free garden at 2015 Gardening Scotland linked with lobbying for peat levy 	<p>Garden for Life</p> <p>Garden for Life</p> <p>Garden for Life</p> <p>Garden for Life</p>
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that investment in research into alternatives is maintained • Develop 'demonstrating success' publication on peat alternatives companies and their products • Promote green waste as a sustainable growing media • Tighten contracts on managing green waste 	<p>Royal Horticultural Society</p> <p>IUCN</p> <p>Local authorities & WRAP</p> <p>Local authorities & WRAP</p>
Carrots & Sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit protection of peatlands through nature conservation designations. Consider designating remaining intact Lowland Raised Bogs. • Encourage public sector leadership on procurement of alternatives • Peat arising as a by-product from developments (such as wind farms) should be used responsibly rather than diverted to landfill. Suggest that a list of responsible gardens (e.g. RGE and remaining 3 NTS gardens that require peat) be developed 	<p>SNH</p> <p>SG and Local Authorities</p> <p>SNH/SEPA/Planning Authorities</p>