

Growing Media in EU



Fundamental for Modern Horticulture

The growing media sector in the EU

The data and figures given below are the outcome of a comprehensive survey conducted in 2007 on behalf of the European Peat and Growing Media Industry (EPAGMA).

The growing media sector produces a wide range of materials to provide an optimum rooting environment for plant growing. The range of growing media constituents includes peat, other organics like coir, composted materials, and mineral constituents like perlite.

Growing media are just as important working materials as water and fertilizers. They are made to fit the many routine usages in both the professional and the hobby sectors of horticulture, from sowing, pricking out and potting of thousands of different plant species.

The growing media industry represents an industry of 1,3 billion euro turnover accounting for 11.000 jobs across the EU Member States. It is particularly important in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, France and the UK. Growing media are used worldwide.

Key role played by peat in growing media

Of all the different and varying growing media constituents, due to its unparalleled properties for stimulating plant growth; peat represents 86% of all constituents used in the professional sector and 69% of the constituents used for the hobby growing media market.

Peat used as a constituent for the production of growing media for commercial horticulture is a highly significant raw material for vegetable and mushroom growing, floriculture and nursery management.

Peat resources and peat industry

Compared to other peatland usages the use of peatlands for peat extraction is very small:

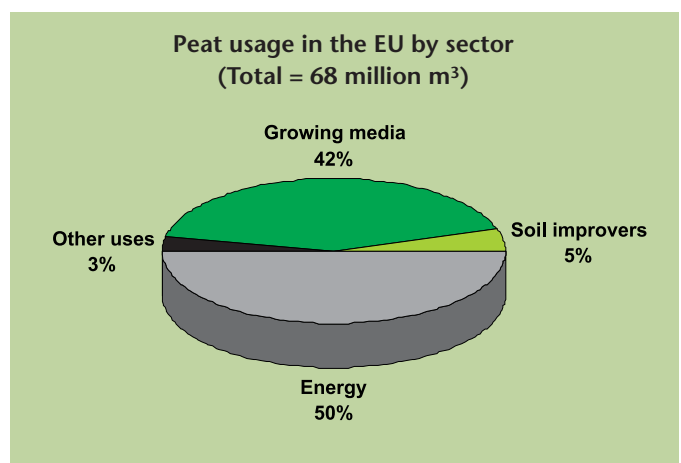
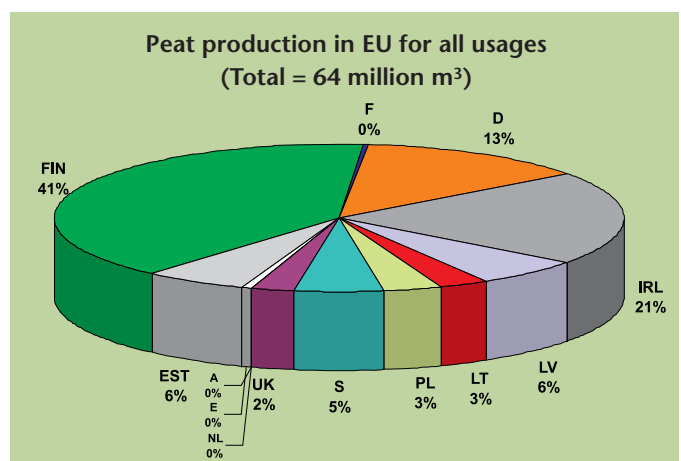
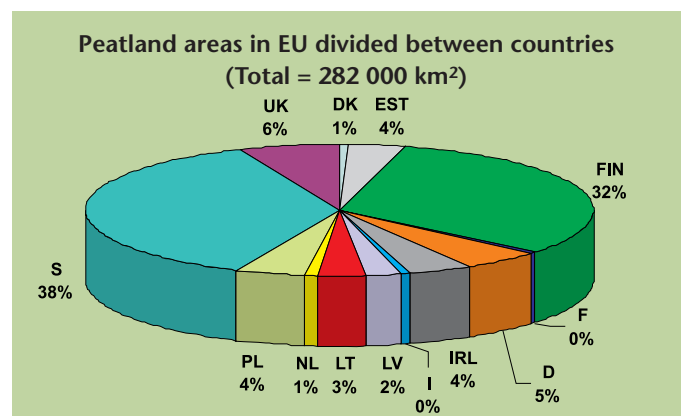
- peatlands worldwide 4 000 000 km²
- peatland areas in EU, total over 282 000 km²
- peat industry worldwide 2 000 km² (0.05% of peatlands)
- peat industry in EU 1 200 km² (0.03% of peatlands worldwide or 0.4% of all European peatlands)
- peat production in EU 64 million m³ in 2005

Significance and size of peat industry

The peat and growing media industry in the EU has a strong significance on three levels: extraction of the raw material, production of growing media and usage of growing media in horticulture.

Most of the horticultural peat producers in the EU are small to medium-sized companies but with strong impact in the rural areas in which peat reserves are located.

The estimated number of full time employees involved in the production, processing, development, marketing and sales of peat and peat-based horticultural products is 11 000.

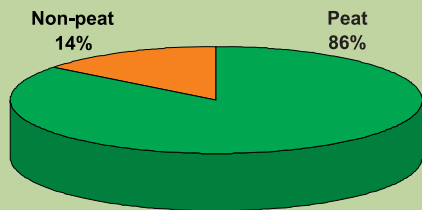


In the EU peat extraction is clearly regulated by European and national legislation

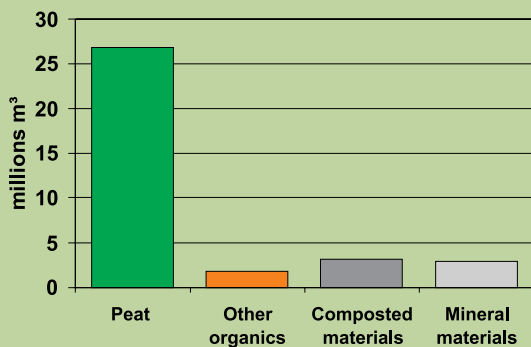
Peat extraction is regulated by 5 main directives

- Environmental Impact Assessment Directive
- Birds Directive
- Habitats Directive (Natura 2000)
- IPPC (Pollution) Directive
- Emissions Trading Directive (ETS)

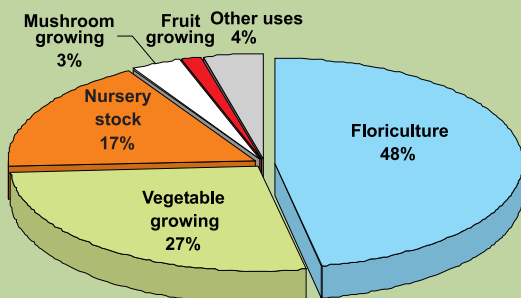
Peat versus non peat constituents for the production of professional growing media (Total > 22 million m³)



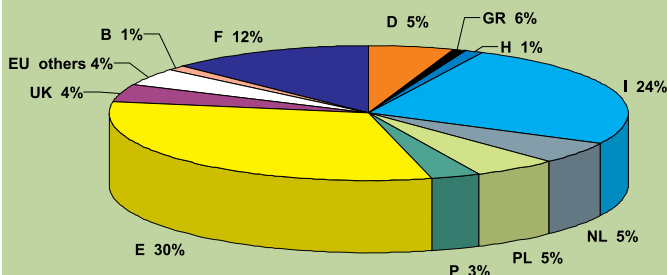
Amounts of growing media types in major producer countries



Peat usage for production of professional growing media by segment (Total = 19 million m³)



Total production value of fruits and vegetables in EU (Total = 45 billion €)



Horticulture in the EU

Horticulture focuses on products that are used for fresh consumption, namely fruit and vegetables, or for decorative purposes, namely trees, pot plants and cut flowers. Regarding the world production of flowers and plants Europe holds the biggest market share (38%), although only approx. 9% of the global production area is located in this continent. Its high production value can be explained by a very intensive cultivation under glass.

Of all growing media produced in EU member states 71% are sold on home markets, 25% are EU exports and 4% are non-EU exports.

	Holdings	Area, ha	Prod. value €
Cutflowers & Pot plants (EU-25)	62 000	56 000	12 billion
Nurseries (EU-25)	18 000	110 000	5 billion
Vegetables (EU-15)	398 000	2 000 000	*45 billion

* Fruits & vegetables

Jobs in professional horticulture

- Over 173 000 full time jobs in ornamental horticulture
- Over 600 000 full-time jobs in growing vegetables.

Sustainable growing media industry helps to sustain horticulture

From the viewpoint of a professional the most important factor is that the growing medium functions well under the grower's growing conditions. A general substitute for peat in growing media is not available. This is because peat has unique and extraordinary physical, chemical and biological characteristics which render it particularly suitable for use in horticulture. Peat-based growing media are available worldwide and they help sustain horticultural production. Without peat modern horticulture would not be sustainable.





epagma 
European Peat and Growing Media Association

EPAGMA, the European Peat and Growing Media Association, aims to contribute to the socio-economic development of regions and communities where peat is sourced and used. EPAGMA is committed to high environmental practices in peat extraction, to the sustainable use of peat as a local energy source and to promoting the unique properties of peat as a growing medium constituent in horticultural plant production. The total survey on socio-economic impacts of peat in horticulture is available on Epagmas web page, www.epagma.org

EPAGMA Secretariat
Burson-Marsteller
37 Square de Meeûs
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel. +32 (0)2 743 6645
Fax +32 (0)2 735 8528
e-mail: info@epagma.org

www.epagma.org