

New Study Demonstrates Essential Role of Peat in EU Horticulture

A new study reveals the peat and growing media industry to be the main contributor to the sustainability of modern horticulture accounting for a turnover of €1.3 billion and 11,000 jobs across Europe. It is the first time that data on the horticulture peat and growing media business and its socio-economic impact is gathered in such complete and comprehensive way and published in a study.

The peat and growing media industry is an important contributor to the sustainability of modern horticulture. It represents an industry with a € 1,3 billion turnover accounting for 11,000 jobs across Europe and is essential to the horticulture industry which is estimated to have a turnover of approx. € 60 billion and provides for over 750,000 jobs. Among growing media constituents, peat represents 69% (hobby market) and 86% (professional market) respectively of all constituents due to its unparalleled properties for stimulating plant growth. This is the conclusion of a study on the "Socio-economic impact of the peat and growing media industry on horticulture in the EU" published by Luxembourg-based marketing consultancy CO CONCEPT¹ today and commissioned by the European Peat and Growing Media Association (EPAGMA)². The study demonstrates the significance and size of the peat and growing media industry and its vital contribution to the EU horticulture sector.

"This is the first time that the importance of the peat and growing media industry for the socio-economic development of the horticulture sector has been demonstrated" commented Matti Hilli, Chairman of EPAGMA. "When one considers that most of the horticultural peat producers in the EU are small to medium-sized companies based in rural areas where peat reserves are located, the socio-economic benefits are all the more important."

In parallel to CO CONCEPT's study, another study commissioned by EPAGMA has been published outlining the EU legislation governing the use of peat and peat-based products. Both studies are summarized in the brochure: "Growing Media in the EU" and are available on the EPAGMA webpage: www.epagma.eu

For more information, please contact the EPAGMA Secretariat at info@epagma.org.

Background: Growing media are major components for providing an optimum rooting environment for plants and they are as important a set of working materials as water and fertilizers. As such, growing media can be adapted to a wide range of horticultural applications in the professional as well as the hobby sectors, including sowing, pricking out and potting of thousands of different plant species. The peat and growing media industry in the EU is centrally involving in the horticultural chain on three levels: extraction of the raw material, production of growing media and usage of growing media in horticulture.

Peat used as a constituent for the production of growing media for commercial horticulture is a particularly important raw material for vegetable and mushroom growing, floriculture and nursery management. Peat has unique and extraordinary physical, chemical and biological characteristics which render it particularly suitable for use in horticulture and cannot be generally substituted by any other constituent. Peat-based growing media therefore play a vital role in helping to sustain horticultural production.

¹ CO CONCEPT is a marketing consultancy specialized in the agricultural and horticultural sector, www.coconcept.lu.

² EPAGMA aims at contributing 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.

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