



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Ending the retail sale of peat in horticulture in England and Wales - Consultation Q&A

We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We're responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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How can I respond to the consultation?

You can view the consultation document and respond to the online survey here: [Ending the retail sale of peat in horticulture in England and Wales - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

If you have any enquiries, would like to respond to the consultation by email or written response instead of the online survey, or have further comment in addition to answering the online survey, please contact us at: Horticultural.Peat@defra.gov.uk or in writing addressed to:

Peat in Horticulture Consultation
Soils and Peatlands Team
Area SE
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

If you are responding in Welsh, please respond to us by email or written response.

Why are you consulting?

Consultation provides us with vital information about how we can meet the diverse needs of people and organisations that may be impacted by our decisions. Consultation also strengthens democracy by encouraging a closer relationship between government and the people affected by our decisions, leading to better and more effective decisions

Why has it taken so long to consider banning the retail sale of peat in horticulture?

The UK Government set voluntary targets in 2011, aiming for a peat-free amateur sector by 2020 and professional sector by 2030 in England. Some significant progress was made, with the investment manufacturers and retailers made into peat alternatives starting to feed into the market. While this progress by the industry is promising, further Government action is needed to ensure the entire industry continues to make progress in switching to peat alternatives, thus ending the use of peat and peat containing products.

What are you doing about peat extraction?

Peat is extracted in the UK for, primarily, horticultural purposes, with bagged retail growing media account for 70% of the peat sold in the UK.

Reducing the demand for peat will undoubtedly have an impact on peat extraction, however some peat will inevitably be required for certain specialised uses. This residual demand for peat can most sensitively be managed from existing extraction sites, where we can put in place appropriate measures to minimise the environmental impacts of its extraction.

Why does the professional sector need longer to end their use of peat and peat containing products in horticulture?

Government recognises that there are currently insufficient amounts of suitable material for both amateur and professional sectors to transition fully and sustainably to peat-free growing media; for some sectors there are also technical difficulties in making that transition. That is why we are consulting and calling for evidence to improve our understanding of these challenges.

What is the government doing to help the horticulture industry to transition to peat-free alternatives?

Defra and industry members have invested over £1 million in a project to provide the necessary applied science to help underpin the development and management of alternative growing media. Over a period of five years, 100 commercial trials examined 213 different growing media blends and, via a programme of 12 industry workshops, built up the skills base essential for growers to effectively manage new growing media.

We have also worked with the industry to develop a Responsible Sourcing Scheme for Growing Media, which allows manufacturers and retailers to make informed choices of growing media inputs to peat free products, based on environmental and social impacts.

Is it true that peat replacement products are just as bad for the environment?

Most products currently used to formulate peat free alternatives are much less damaging to the environment than using peat. We have worked with the industry to develop a Responsible Sourcing Scheme for Growing Media, which allows manufacturers and retailers to make informed choices of growing media inputs to peat free products, based on environmental and social impacts.