



Aylett Nurseries
The Complete Garden Centre

The Importance of Peat



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Peat?

What is Peat?

Peat is made up of incomplete decomposed plant remains (sedges, reeds, grasses, mosses etc.) and is formed when natural process of decay is stopped by waterlogging and oxygen is excluded. The plant remains become compacted over hundreds/thousands of years to form peat.

Peat is the major constituent in most horticultural growing media, as it is well suited to a wide range of plant species and growing regimes.

Why is it important to reduce our Peat consumption?

- Peat bogs are the UK's most threatened wildlife habitat supporting some plant, bird and insect species unique to that environment.
- Peatlands contain one third of the world's carbon, exceeding that of the world's forests. When the top layer of peatland vegetation is removed and the peat is exposed, carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere as the plant remains decompose, exacerbating global warming and climate change.
- Peat bogs have a role in the global hydrological/water cycle, as they contain 10% of global freshwater resources. In the UK peatlands are thought to play an important role in flood prevention as peat acts like a sponge holding significant amounts of water.
- Because peat takes many years to form it is a unique geological and biological data base.

What are we doing about this?

In March 2010 Aylett Nurseries Ltd. became the first independent garden centre in the country to become a full member of the Growing Media Initiative (GMI). To achieve this, we needed to have in place: -

- Own peat sourcing policy that met with GMI approval + proof of compliance by our bagged growing media suppliers.
- Targets to at least match those set by the GMI. (By working with our suppliers, we know the % of peat in each product. With this knowledge and our sales figures, we know that by the end of 2014 our bagged growing media products sold were 61.11% peat free.)

Independent annual audits were carried out to check that we continued to meet the requirements of GMI full membership. A new responsible sourcing scheme to replace the existing GMI scheme instigated by the Department of Food & Rural Affairs is currently being developed.

What can you use instead of peat?

In Compost

We stock low peat and peat free composts. Try New Horizon Peat Free (Which? Best Buy) or Sylvagrow Peat Free Multi-Purpose Compost.

For Mulching

Bark chips can be used as a general mulch. Sulphur chips can be used to acidify the soil for ericaceous plants if the soil is alkaline.

For Soil Improvement

When planting shrubs etc. products such as Westland Soil Conditioner can be worked into the planting hole to improve the soil conditions to help new plants to establish.

All our growing media is displayed with the percentage of peat it contains - you know what you are buying.

AYLETT NURSERIES LTD.

PEAT SOURCING AND REDUCTION POLICY

It is the policy of the Directors of Aylett Nurseries Limited to ensure that the peat used in the UK growing media products causes the minimum environmental impact.

To achieve this all naggged growing media will be sourced from suppliers certified to the British Ornamental Plant Producers (BOPP) Growing Media Producers Standard or equivalent, as follows: -

1. Peat should only be extracted from legally approved peatland sites that are not designated as a SSSI or are not from sites of recognisable ecological, archaeological or other conservation value (worldwide); this includes all areas that have been designated under the relevant national or international regulatory regime from the country from which the peat is sourced.
2. Peat is extracted only from sites with an agreed environmentally sound and socially responsible after use plan. Planning consents may have their own specific requirements for restoration/ after-use that the peat extractor has to comply with.
3. Peat is extracted only from sites operated in such a way as to protect un-worked adjacent peat areas and maintain water tables to enable them to act as refugia for peatland flora and fauna.
4. Sites are operated in such a way as to leave a sufficient layer or ombrotrophic peat (raised or blanket bogs that receive all water and nutrients from direct precipitation) to facilitate the re-establishment of bog flora and fauna.
5. Peat should be sourced from named bogs to allow traceability and should not be sourced from any peat concessions opened since 2004.

The peat sourcing and Reduction policy will be reviewed at least annually and is available on the company website, at reception and displayed in the main growing media sales area.



A W Wigglesworth

Director

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**This leaflet is available in
alternative formats**

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