



Draft Submission to the

Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

On

A review of the Use of Peat in the Horticultural Industry

From

Enrich Environmental Ltd

Kilcock, Co. Meath



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HEALTHY SOIL HEALTHY PLANTS HEALTHY PEOPLE

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10. Public Consultation Questions

A. What are your views on what more could be done to support and enable the switch to peat free horticulture at professional crop production level and consumer level?

Comment:

There should be a restriction on use of peat in recreational and amenity horticulture. There should also be a legal requirement for the peat to be phased out in favour of peat-free products.

A levy can be put on sales of peat products to help aid the transition from peat based products.

B. What are your views on alternatives to the use of peat in the Horticultural Industry (from, for example, the perspective of the professional grower or consumer/amateur gardener)?

Comment:

There has been a successful program of incorporating green waste into peat products. This has been driven by EU and UK demand. In the domestic market in Ireland, there has been little effort to transition. There should be more information regarding benefits and use of peat-free compost.

International research into peat alternatives and reduced peat have shown successful results. Research and development should be conducted locally to suit the various applications and help transition away from peat based products.

C. What are your views on whether Ireland should cut back or cease the export of peat for use outside of Ireland even if this would result in job losses in Ireland?

Comment:

The extraction of peat must be stopped, no new area should be drained to create new areas for extraction. The peat industry should be given support to retrain and deploy people affected to new areas – such as restoring exploited bogs. Bogs are a huge sink for carbon and there drained bog is a huge contributor to carbon emissions.

D. Do you consider that a working group should be established to advise on how best to overcome the barriers to reducing peat use in professional horticultural crop production and in the amateur horticultural market?

Comment:

Yes and the group should consist of some national+ international and local peat and compost experts.

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E. If you are in favour of the establishment of a working group, which stakeholder groups do you think should be represented on it?

Comment:

Yes a working group should be established. Shareholders should include experienced operators in the industry of peat alternative producers, growing media specialists, soil scientists, and international bodies who have demonstrated their work.

F. How do you think that those involved in harvesting peat for horticulture could be compensated for any loss arising from a cessation of this activity (for example, on the basis of the profit loss arising or related to the value in ecosystem services retained/provided)?

Comment

No

G. How do you think that those involved in harvesting peat for horticulture could be guided towards alternative activities, for example, developing an environmentally suitable alternative material that could replace peat in professional horticultural crop production?

Comment:

Yes. Exchange of knowledge should be encouraged.

H. What do you consider the value of peatlands to be to (please score out of 100):
carbon storage 50

nature conservation 25

the provision of ecosystem services 10

the economy 5

social and cultural needs 10

100

I. In your opinion should the use of peat within (i) the amateur horticultural market and (ii) the professional horticultural industry be phased out over the next 3, 5, 10, 15 or 20 years and if so, how should this be done bearing in mind the potential job losses and the difficulties with alternative growing media?

Comment:

The use of peat in recreational horticulture should be phased out in the short-term. The current model of stack them high and sell cheap is adding to a disposable use. Seasonal plants

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that are growing in peat are being discarded and in many cases the peat material may end up in landfill.

J. Does more need to be done to educate and build consumer awareness of peat free products which are available at retail level?

Comment:

Yes. Enrich hold a number of open days at their composting facility to demonstrate our research and general use of the peat-free compost. Enrich supply peat-free compost to many high profile projects throughout Ireland. We currently carry out many trials on peat-free composts and have displaced peat based growing media from being used in amenity horticultural activities.

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