

peatinhorticulturereview@chg.gov.ie

Based on climate change concerns, as well as the potential continued loss and degradation of valuable biodiversity, I am strongly in favour of a reduction (and ideally phasing out) of the use of peat in horticulture.

I was very disappointed that figures were not provided in the review to indicate what proportion of the peat harvested for horticulture is used in Ireland, in Northern Ireland, in the rest of the UK, and further afield. This information would be very valuable in terms of helping people give meaningful feedback as part of this public consultation. Could this information be added asap? It would be great if it were.

I would like to see a much improved campaign to encourage the general public (as well as business owners) to make full use of their 'brown bins' where available, and I'd like to see this compost available to growers large and small (free or at a cost). There should be a roll-out of such 'municipal' composting to all areas of the country – this would create jobs, and this product would go some way to filling the gap left by peat. We are missing a trick by having absolutely huge amounts of food waste, which is not being captured at least for compost (better if it wasn't wasted in the first place of course).

I have provided some answers below, but my main contributions have been mentioned here.

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?

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)?

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?

[We should definitely be cutting back, with an aim to ceasing, the export of peat for horticultural use.](#)

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?

[Would be useful.](#)

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

[Ecologist from National Parks and Wildlife Service would be a valuable asset, and so also a member of the NGO sector.](#)

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)?

See my note above about possible job creation following a massive upscaling and roll out of composting of food waste from homes and businesses. Best not to 'compensate', rather to provide alternative opportunities.

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?

Again, see my note above

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

- carbon storage	25
- nature conservation	20
- the provision of ecosystem services	40
- the economy	5
- social and cultural needs	10

[It is unclear if you want each item scored out of 100, or if you want the total score to add to 100? I went with the latter. This part of the document should be amended so that the intention is clear, and therefore the data you receive is usable.]

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?

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

Definitely! Until very recently only the die-hard conservationists have the stamina to go seek out peat-free compost. It has gotten a little better recently, but there is some way to go! A public awareness campaign would be very helpful.