

ABSTRACT IPC 2021

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Quo vadis, peat? The industry's view on the future of peat in Europe

The political pressure on peat in Europe is at its highest level ever. While peat-based growing media contribute to achieving several objectives of the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, peat has become a convenient scapegoat to blame for climate change and biodiversity loss. Several European countries have adopted more or less precise policies to ban or phase out the use of peat on national level, and decision makers in the European Institutions start pushing in the same direction.

Still, European growing media production depends and relies on peat. Despite decades of research on non-peat constituents, no "peat alternative" has yet been found that could replace peat in quality and quantity. The demand for growing media is rising fast and while the share of non-peat constituents is increasing, peat remains the "enabler" of other raw materials.

As the voice of the European growing media producers, Growing Media Europe has to take a stance in this controversy and reveal its vision of the future of horticultural peat in Europe. Is the battle lost already or can decisions be stopped by science-based arguments? Should growing media producers invest in promoting "peat-free" as the future or should they rather defend peat as THE base for responsible production of fit-for-purpose growing media? The presentation will discuss these questions in light of the political picture on European level and describe the way GME is responding to these developments today and in the future.