

The Government's Proposed Peat Ban – An Update

Introduction

During 2022/23 there was a great deal of publicity regarding the Government's intention to introduce a ban on all peat products for amateur horticulture by the end of 2023. This ban hasn't been enforced as yet and following a request to DEFRA the statement below was received.

The Government has always been clear about the need to end the use of peat and peat containing products in horticulture in England for reasons relating to carbon storage and loss of habitat and biodiversity.

In 2011 we entered into a voluntary agreement to end the use of peat in growing media by 2030. Last August we announced that we would ban the sale of peat for use in amateur gardening by 2024, and recently confirmed that we would extend these provisions to professional use by 2030, whilst including technical exemptions for professional growers. There will be no restriction on the professional sector until after 2026.

The detail of the legislation is yet to be set out; the retail ban is likely to come in at the end of 2024, but would apply to the retail sale of peat and peat-containing products, so traders would be expected to run down stocks in anticipation of the legislation coming into force.

The Government is currently co-funding with the horticultural industry monitoring of the composition of growing media (including peat) that is supplied for amateur and professional use in the horticultural market. The Government is also co-funding research into peat-free growing media with the Royal Horticultural Society and industry leaders over the next three years; this research will expand the knowledge base regarding the quality of peat-free growing media. Defra will continue to work with the industry to identify blockages and work across the Government, and the private sector, to develop and enact solutions to ending the use of peat and peat-containing products.

Conclusion

From the above statement it's clear that although there is an intent to introduce a ban, the mechanics of this hasn't been put in place.

As you will see from previous articles on our Website, my opinion is that the industry isn't ready to supply a good enough quality peat-free substitute compost in the quantities required, and dependant on the projects mentioned above it may well be that the introduction of the ban could be extended beyond 2024?

Supplies of Compost Available from our Shop

We have stocks of **Peat based** compost in the Allotment shop, see below for what's available:

- Clover Multi-Purpose 60Ltr
(This is the standard we've stocked for many years – now only available in 60Ltr bags)

- Clover Multi-Purpose enriched with JI 60Ltr
(A little more expensive than the Standard but worth the extra cost for tasks like pricking out)

- Clover Ericaceous 75Ltr
(Especially for any Lime hating plants – Blueberries, Hydrangeas, etc.)

- Clover Professional Various
(Our new supplier offers a range of 'Professional' peat-based composts. Some of us have been using the Professional Seed with excellent results. It's a little more expensive than the Multi-purpose but for the specialist grower well worth it. Ask in the shop to see the range)

We also stock **Peat-Free** compost for anyone who prefers this option.

- John Innes Compost Seed, No1, No2, No3 25Kg
(The Gardener's 'Standard' soil based compost)

- Eco-Gro Peat Free Compost 40Ltr
(During 2023 a number of us have been sampling a variety of Peat-Free composts and I'm sorry to say that many have not come up to

the mark – especially for fine tasks like seed sowing. However, the one we all agreed is the best is Eco-Gro and we have it in stock in the shop. Litre for Litre it's more expensive than Peat-Based equivalents – but that is the way it will be!)

John Hollands

8 December 2023