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Substrate materials in the UK – direction of travel?

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Peat-Free Pressures and Drivers

All figures in million m^3				
	2009		2021	
Growing media (retail + professional)	4.21		4.77	
peat	2.93	70%	1.69	35%
non-peat	1.28	30%	3.08	65%

(Figures from HTA/Defra docs)

- Wood fibre and coir have seen a six fold increase in use

- Defra consulting on 2024 peat ban
- Retailers showing increased interest

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Non-peat materials being used / explored:

- Wood fibre(s)
- Coir(s)
- Composted bark(s)
- Dried AD fibre(s)

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Other "novel" materials

- Agricultural crops?
- Other agricultural (industrial?) waste streams
- Others (sphagnum, coffee grounds etc)
- Volume * Quality (consistency)
- Traceable?
- Sustainable?

Where are we?

- So could we, the wider horticultural industry, go peat-free “tomorrow”?

- GUESTIMATE ~20% (by volume) short
- Not volume, its “appropriateness”

Innovation taking place

- Last 5 years - huge changes
- More and more novel materials
- Increasingly manipulating other materials (physically and chemically)

- Critical mass / direction of travel

- Grower attitude

- ….. costs?

Where are Bulrush?

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- Bedding
- Nursery stock
- Seeding
- Poinsettia
- Ericaceous (trial)

- Other trials (soft fruit and pharmaceutical products)

- ~65% peat-free across our business

Opinion - Soft fruit & coir

- "Be aware"
- Global supply v demand (competition)?
  - German peat reduction targets
  - Netherlands peat reduction targets
  - Available volumes? Speculative figures out there
- Traceability?
- Sustainable?