



B&Q Peat Policy & Buying Standards

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Introduction

B&Q recognise that the use of peat in growing media has a finite future without the exploitation of currently unharvested peat bogs. We will therefore work progressively towards eliminating the use of peat in our products without compromising product performance or customer confidence.

Background

B&Q continues its policy, established in 1991, of not buying or selling peat extracted from peatland sites of recognised ecological, archaeological or other conservation value (worldwide). This strategy has expanded to include areas that have been notified or proposed for notification under the relevant national or international regulatory regime for the country that the peat is sourced from.

B&Q also requires sound plans for restoration of biodiversity interest at the cessation of peat extraction from the bogs at which B&Q peat is sourced.

We will continue to work with our entire supply chain to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of peat, through a sustained peat dilution and replacement programme. This includes branded and own-branded products, and peat used as growing media for plants sold in pots. In 2014 we achieved a 63.8% (up from 61% in 2013) growing media peat dilution (by volume).

We recognise that using alternative or recycled materials in horticulture will help reduce peat consumption as well as benefit sustainable development. We will continue to work with governments, NGO's and the industry towards achieving this target; for a joint approach to increasing availability and use of recycled and alternative materials. We will always endeavour to achieve this aim using the most sustainable alternative materials available, sourced on a global basis.

Aim

Our aim is to manage, minimise and eventually eliminate our peat use in a controlled manner. We will use declining amounts of peat, as a proportion of the total volume, and we will continue to ensure that it has been extracted with the minimum amount of environmental impact; eventually working towards a best practice policy where we do not extract from any peatland site.

We have a continuous improvement trials programme for testing reduced peat and peat free growing media and are actively engaged with growers to expand this dilution initiative. We are also considering a wider range of sustainable materials which could be used to replace peat and produce products which consistently perform at the same standards as the peat based equivalents.

Rules

We regard it as essential that we enable our customers to make informed choices about their purchases. We will therefore take the following steps:

- Our ongoing commitment is to achieve a further dilution in the peat content of our peat-containing bagged growing media.
- Work with our growers to increase the peat alternative dilution rate in the plants we sell.
- Provide consistent, factual information to our customers about peat alternatives and the reasons for choosing them;
- Ensure no peat products are labelled as 'organic' and/or 'renewable' so as not to give a false impression of sustainability;
- Stock a range of alternatives to peat and peat based products at competitive prices and extend this range to all stores;
- Not source peat from any new or existing peat concessions opened post 2005, as a minimum, for either our bagged media and for the peat supplied to our growers/nursery suppliers;
- Clearly label all products that contain peat, including bagged media and potted plants, and identify the percentage in each product;
- Actively participate in the Growing Media Initiative;
- Report our progress on peat dilution within our Key Performance Indicators (KPI's); and
- Develop dilution strategies for peat used as growing media for plants sold in pots, where possible, given the specific requirements of the plants, using the same principles as for growing media.

Upcoming Rules

Defra has set out a policy framework to reduce the use of peat in horticulture to zero by 2030 as part of the Natural Environment White Paper (2011):

This includes the following milestones:

- a progressive phase-out target of 2015 for government and the public sector on direct procurement of peat in new contracts for plants;
- a voluntary phase-out target of 2020 for amateur gardeners; and
- a final voluntary phase-out target of 2030 for professional growers of fruit, vegetables and plants

In response to this framework the Sustainable Growing Media Task Force was established (of which B&Q was a member. B&Q is now a member of the Growing Media Panel which replaced the Task Force); releasing a Chairman's Report and Roadmap to 2015 (2012). Key points from the Roadmap include:

- All growing media and soil improvers should be made from raw materials that are environmentally and socially responsibly sourced and manufactured.
- Commercial horticulture uses only responsibly sourced and manufactured growing media.

- Retailers only stock products which meet the performance standard and responsible sourcing and manufacturing standard.

Please note: In 2015 Defra are conducting a comprehensive review of the policy framework and what progress has been made to date against the peat phase-out targets. A report is to be submitted to government Ministers in Autumn 2015 and the government response to the Defra report is expected in December 2015.

Best Practice Recommendations

In addition to fulfilling the above rules, 100% peat free growing media may be included under the Kingfisher Eco Product Guidelines as a “Best in Class” or One Planet Home product.

B&Q aim to eliminate peat from ‘bagged growing media’ sold in the UK ahead of the government 2020 deadline. B&Q will continue to work with our suppliers on reducing and eventually eliminating the amount of peat contained in all growing media and plants we sell.

Reporting Requirements and Key Performance Indicators

The Range Sustainability Rating will include assessment of the relevant ranges. This rating is compiled annually by B&Q Social Responsibility. Our progress towards peat dilution is reported within our Key Performance Indicators.

For the Best Practice Recommendations of achieving targets based on the Kingfisher Eco Product Guidelines, these are reported quarterly and annually by B&Q Social Responsibility. This reporting includes a check by BioRegional that all products fulfil the relevant criteria.

Linked Policies

- Kingfisher Eco Product Guidelines
- Guidance Note: Making Good Green Claims

Further Reading

- Natural White Paper: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/>
- Sustainable Growing Media Taskforce: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/peat-taskforce/>
- Growing Media Initiative: <http://www.the-hta.org.uk/>
- Royal Horticultural Society: <http://www.rhs.org.uk/peat>
- Plantlife: <http://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/policy/peat/>