

Joe Swift
Television gardener & designer

"I'm not as concerned about individual plant performance as I am about the environment. It boils down to a question of priorities."

"There are some gardeners who swear by peat and say that other growing mediums simply don't compete."

"I try to keep away from peat-based products and use alternatives wherever possible. I certainly don't use peat in my own garden - unless I buy a plant from a nursery, which has been potted with a peat-based medium."

- Buying peat-free or making your own compost
- Asking for plants grown in peat-free compost
- Asking your MP to press for government action to protect peatlands
- Asking your local garden centre for a copy of its peat policy
- Refusing to shop in garden centres stocking peat from SSSIs*
- Joining your local Wildlife Trust. To find out how call 0870 036 7711 or visit www.wildlifetrusts.org

It has never been easier to go peat-free. Whether in your vegetable plot, bedding plants or throughout your garden, you can kick the peat habit. By using peat-free products, you are gardening for wildlife and helping to safeguard our peat bogs.

Famous gardens such as Highgrove, The Natural History Museum and Cabinet Office do not use any peat or chemicals in their wildlife gardens. You can follow their example by:

How you can help

Amateur gardeners account for around 70% of peat used in horticulture. Together with other uses of peat, this is a major threat to our remaining peat bogs. To extract peat, the bog is drained and the surface stripped of vegetation, a process which kills the bog. Peat-bogs act as carbon sinks, so they can also help reduce climate change. Their destruction is therefore a serious loss both to wildlife and people. Once destroyed, they are gone forever.

Why are peat-bogs being destroyed

REMEMBER: Peat is better in the bog than in the bag!

- The information contained in this leaflet was correct at the time of its production.
- Company policies mean that the range of products may change.
- Not all products are available in all stores.
- Mention of branded products does not mean that the brands or producers are endorsed by The Wildlife Trusts.

Further information on peat-free products and wildlife gardening may be available from your local Wildlife Trust and by visiting: www.wildaboutgardens.org

The following websites give further information on peat-free products:

- www.crocus.co.uk
- www.fertilefibre.co.uk
- www.harrodhorticultural.com
- www.peateringout.com
- www.terraecosystems.com
- www.vitalizer.tv

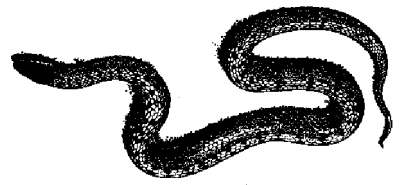


The Wildlife Trusts are a partnership of 47 local Wildlife Trusts across the UK, plus the Isle of Man and Alderney. We care for more than 2,500 nature reserves spanning over 80,000 hectares. Our vision is 'an environment richer in wildlife for everyone' and we campaign for the protection of wildlife and invest in the future by helping people everywhere gain a greater appreciation and understanding of wildlife.

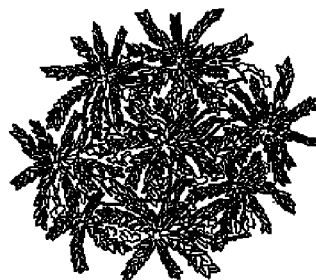
The Wildlife Trusts
 The Kiln, Waterside
 Mather Road
 Newark
 Nottinghamshire
 NG24 1WT
 Tel: 0870 0367711
 Email: info@wildlifetrusts.cix.co.uk
www.wildlifetrusts.org

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Bogs are also useful cultural reserves. The ecology of bogs makes them excellent for preserving archaeological remains and palaeoecological research. Lindow man was discovered in a bog in Cheshire where he had lain undisturbed for over 2000 years.



The UK's lowland raised peat bogs are amongst the most important and valuable wildlife habitats we have. They are home to many important species of birds, thousands of rare insect species and a wealth of unusual plants. But only a fragment of near-natural bog remains in the UK, with more than 94% having been damaged or destroyed.



Why are peat-bogs important?

Peat grows naturally in a living bog. Plants living on the surface such as sphagnum mosses, bog cotton and heathers – don't rot when they die because the ground is water-logged. They form peat.

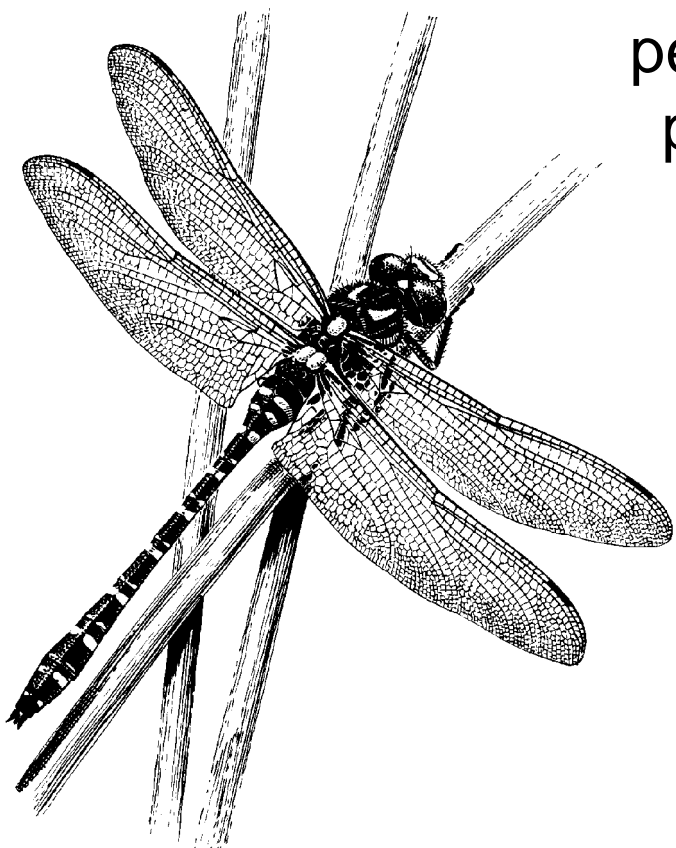


What is peat?

For Peat's Sake



Where to buy
 peat-free
 products
 05/06



HOW THE BIG STORES RATE

	B&Q	Focus (DIY) Ltd	Wickes Building Supplies Ltd	Tesco	Homebase Ltd	Asda
1. Which stores have a peat policy?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Which stores refuse to sell composts containing peat?	No	No	No	No	No	No
3. Which stores refuse to sell composts containing peat from SSSIs*?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Which stores sell some peat-free composts at the same price as (or less than) peat?	1	Yes	No	?	No	No
5. Which stores sell diluted peat products? ²	Yes ³	Yes ⁴	No ⁵	Yes ⁶	Yes ⁷	No
6. What proportion of their compost sales in 2004 were peat-free?	44%	35%	62%	?	41%	4.3%
7. Which stores refuse to sell plants grown in peat?	No	No	No	No	No	No
8. Which stores refuse to sell plants grown in peat from SSSIs*?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9. Which stores stock plants grown in peat-free composts?	Yes ⁸	No	No	Yes ⁹	Yes ¹⁰	Yes ¹¹
10. Which stores have targets for reducing peat composts?	Yes ¹²	Yes ¹³	Yes ¹⁴	Yes ¹⁵	Yes ¹⁶	¹⁷

? = Information not available at time of leaflet production.

These floating worlds took 1000s of years to form and act as a record of time by preserving undisturbed remains.

Explanatory Notes:

- B&Q has a commitment to selling peat-free products at competitive prices.
- Some stores sell peat products that are diluted with peat alternatives. Check the label for peat content.
- As part of B&Q's dilution strategy, it has a minimum of 10% peat alternatives in the majority of its growing media, and is now increasing this level to about 15%. B&Q's bedding and nursery ranges have an average level of 20% peat alternatives such as composted bark and wood fibre. All pots will be clearly labelled to show peat content.
- Focus stocks a variety of dilute peat products. The percentage of peat varies from 33% to 90% across the growing media range. Many of the Focus outdoor container plants are grown in about 20% diluted peat composts. Peat content is labelled on all Focus own-brand outdoor plants.
- Wickes has limited sales of container plants, all grown in a 90% peat mix.
- In 2004, approximately 15% of growing media used in plant sales were peat-free, and Tesco hopes this will rise next year. Some recycled peat is used in dry bulb products.
- Homebase has dilute products ranging from 50% peat-free to 20% peat-free. Homebase now grows 90% of its nursery stock in peat-reduced media, and many are up to 50% peat-free.
- B&Q are offering an organically grown vegetable range, grown in peat-free compost and endorsed by the Soil Association.
- Tesco has some plant lines that are grown entirely peat-free but not promoted as such. Suppliers are actively encouraged by Tesco to investigate peat-free growing media and a number of trials are in place using a range of products eg bark/woodchip, coir, perlite/clay and green waste.
- Homebase will growing at least 10% of its plants in peat-free media in 2005. These include conifers, potted fruit trees, fruit bushes, potted Christmas trees and containerised trees.
- All Asda's container plants were grown in 100% peat-free media, including petunias, French marigolds, pansies and lobelias.
- B&Q targets are for 75% peat-free use by 2005 and 85% by 2006. B&Q aims to eventually eliminate peat through its dilution strategy. Current dilution targets will be reviewed at the end of 2006.
- Focus has achieved the Government's target of 40% of all materials used in growing media and soil improver to be peat-free by 2005. The Focus growing media range for 2005 aims to achieve 50% peat-free by the end of 2005.
- Wickes is currently exceeding the targets of the group policy. It has adopted a policy that, over time, will reduce and eventually eliminate the use of peat. There is no target date at present.
- Tesco is working towards the Government targets of 40% peat-free by the end of 2005, and 90% peat-free by 2010.
- Homebase is on course to achieve its target of 50% of growing media and soil conditioners sold to be peat-free by the end of 2005. Targets for the end of 2006, and for each year until 2009 are to further reduce use of peat by 10%, so that by the end of 2009, 90% of growing media and soil conditioners are peat-free.
- Asda plans to set targets following its review.

The government has set targets for peat-free use of 40% by 2005 and 90% by 2010.

***Note: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs/ASSIs in Northern Ireland)** The term SSSI applies to areas of land that have been notified under the provisions of **The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of 'special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features'**. Designation means that the statutory conservation agencies have powers to protect these sites.

HOW THIS GUIDE CAN HELP YOU

Peat bogs are important wildlife-rich habitats, which support many special (and some unique) plants and animals.

This guide tells you which peat-free products can be found in the major national chain stores this year, and how you can make a difference for peatland conservation. Our fascinating peat bogs, their wildlife and historical records can be saved by gardeners choosing wisely.

A wide range of peat-free compost is on sale for use in garden centres as mulches, soil improvers and growing media. More and more container-grown plants are being sold in peat-free composts.

Peat-free composts, such as bark, can be found in all good garden centres. Many stores have taken the positive step of refusing to sell composts made from, or plants grown in, peat mined from our most important bogs, designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs*) but this does not go far enough.

The Wildlife Trusts are campaigning vigorously to persuade retailers to replace all peat stocks with good peat-free alternatives.

WHERE TO BUY PEAT-FREE COMPOSTS

B&Q	Homebase Ltd
B&Q Organic garden compost (G) B&Q Organic peat-free growing bag (G) B&Q Organic multi-purpose compost (G) B&Q Organic peat-free multi-purpose compost (G) B&Q Decorative chipped bark (M) B&Q Mini chipped bark (M) B&Q Play area bark (M) B&Q Coloured hardwood chips (M) B&Q Ornamental pine bark nuggets (M) B&Q Hardwood chips (M) B&Q Peat alternative ground and composted bark (M) B&Q Top soil (S) B&Q Organic soil improver (S) Flourish chipped bark (M) Forest floor garden chips (M) Garden path hardwood chips (M) Sea shells decorative dressing (M) Multisave decorative chipped bark (M) Premium Gold Decorative pine bark (M) JAB Top Soil (S) Shamrock nature's own coir compost (G) Shamrock peat-free growbag (G) Westland sterilised top soil (S) Woodland bark (M)	Homebase Multi-purpose peat-free compost (G) Homebase Peat-free growbag (G) Homebase Bark chips (M) Homebase Mini chip bark (M) Homebase Cocoa shell mulch (M) Homebase Soil improver (S) Homebase Top soil (S) Homebase Farmyard manure (S) Value basics bark (M) Westland Peat-free with John Innes (G) Westland Pine nuggets (M)
Focus (DIY) Ltd	Wickes Building Supplies Ltd
Focus Peat-free multi-purpose compost (G) Focus Peat-free grow bag (G) Focus Decorative bark chips (M) Focus Mini bark chips (M) Westland Peat-free multi-purpose compost with John Innes (G) Westland Top soil (G) Westland Farmyard manure (S)	Wickes Top soil (G) Wickes Bark chippings (M) Landscape decorative bark chips (M) Westland Peat-free multi John Innes (G) Westland Farmyard manure (S)
Tesco	Asda
Tesco Peat-free multi-purpose compost (G) New Horizon Peat-free compost (G)	Asda Woodland bark (M) Bulrush Peat-free (G)

Key

S = Soil Improvers

Soil improvers are added to the soil to improve texture and structure. Peat has often been used but other materials perform better. Peat adds very little nutrient to the soil. Garden composts and leaf-mould are amongst the best and cheapest of soil enrichers.

M = Mulch

Mulch is a layer of material placed on top of the soil to suppress weeds, conserve moisture and act as an insulator. Peat is a poor-mulch, tending to dry out and blow away. There are many more suitable products available.

G = Growing Media

Growing media are used to grow plants in. A range of peat-free products are available for growing plants at all stage of their development. These composts need to be used slightly differently to peat, but instructions are on the bags or on accompanying leaflets.