

PEAT

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)¹

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated f.o.b. plant value of marketable peat production in the conterminous United States was \$13.0 million in 2012. Peat was harvested and processed by about 35 companies in 12 of the conterminous States. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, which conducted its own canvass of producers, reported 61,500 cubic meters of peat was produced in 2011; output was reported only by volume.² A production estimate was unavailable for Alaska for 2012. Florida and Minnesota were the leading producing States, in order of quantity harvested. Reed-sedge peat accounted for approximately 85% of the total volume produced, followed by sphagnum moss, 10%, hypnum moss, 4%, and humus, 1%. About 80% of domestic peat was sold for horticultural use, including general soil improvement, golf course construction, nurseries, and potting soils. Other applications included earthworm culture medium, mixed fertilizers, mushroom culture, packing for flowers and plants, seed inoculants, and vegetable cultivation. In the industrial sector, peat was used as an oil absorbent and as an efficient filtration medium for the removal of waterborne contaminants in mine waste streams, municipal storm drainage, and septic systems.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012^e</u>
Production	615	609	628	568	560
Commercial sales	647	644	605	595	570
Imports for consumption	936	906	947	982	940
Exports	³ 57	77	69	49	75
Consumption, apparent ⁴	1,440	1,440	1,560	1,500	1,500
Price, average value, f.o.b. mine, dollars per ton	26.42	23.24	24.39	22.73	23.00
Stocks, producer, yearend	152	149	100	133	100
Employment, mine and plant, number ^e	620	610	610	600	580
Net import reliance ⁵ as a percentage of apparent consumption	57	58	60	61	62

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2008–11): Canada, 96%; and other, 4%.

<u>Tariff: Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u>
Peat	2703.00.0000	<u>12–31–12</u> Free.

Depletion Allowance: 5% (Domestic).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Peat is an important component of growing media, and the demand for peat generally follows that of horticultural applications. In the United States, the short-term outlook is for production to average about 560,000 tons per year and imported peat from Canada to account for more than 60% of domestic consumption.

Canada's peat harvest showed improvement over the 2011 season. Eastern Canada had higher than expected volumes of peat being harvested, while central Canada was slightly above expectations. An early start of the season and favorable weather conditions contributed to the increase in peat production in eastern and central Canada.

World Mine Production and Reserves: Countries that reported by volume only and had insufficient data for conversion to tons were combined and included with "Other countries."

	Mine production		Reserves ⁶
	2011	2012 ^e	
United States	568	560	150,000
Belarus	2,730	3,300	400,000
Canada	1,120	1,200	720,000
Estonia	960	970	60,000
Finland	6,460	6,400	6,000,000
Germany	2,930	2,900	(?)
Ireland	3,300	3,700	(?)
Latvia	1,120	1,000	76,000
Lithuania	326	330	190,000
Moldova	475	475	(?)
Norway	425	300	(?)
Poland	670	750	(?)
Russia	1,650	1,300	1,000,000
Sweden	2,550	2,500	(?)
Ukraine	454	600	(?)
Other countries	540	510	1,400,000
World total (rounded)	26,300	26,800	10,000,000

World Resources: Peat is a renewable resource, continuing to accumulate on 60% of global peatlands. However, the volume of global peatlands has been decreasing at a rate of 0.05% annually owing to harvesting and land development. Many countries evaluate peat resources based on volume or area because the variations in densities and thickness of peat deposits make it difficult to estimate tonnage. Volume data have been converted using the average bulk density of peat produced in that country. Reserve data were estimated based on data from International Peat Society publications and the percentage of peat resources available for peat extraction. More than 50% of the U.S. peatlands are located in undisturbed areas of Alaska. Total world resources of peat were estimated to be between 5 trillion and 6 trillion tons, covering about 400 million hectares.⁸

Substitutes: Natural organic materials such as composted yard waste and coir (coconut fiber) compete with peat in horticultural applications. Shredded paper and straw are used to hold moisture for some grass-seeding applications. The superior water-holding capacity and physiochemical properties of peat limit substitution alternatives.

^eEstimated.

¹See Appendix A for conversion to short tons.

²Harbo. L.A., Mineral Specialist, Alaska Office of Economic Development, oral commun., September 5, 2012.

³Source: U.S. Census Bureau; adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey.

⁴Defined as production + imports – exports + adjustments for industry stock changes.

⁵Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

⁶See Appendix C for resource/reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

⁷Included with "Other countries."

⁸Lappalainen, Eino, 1996, Global peat resources: Jyvaskyla, Finland, International Peat Society, p. 55.