

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 \$11.0 million in 2013. Peat was harvested and processed by about 34 companies in 12 of the conterminous States. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, which conducted its own canvass of producers, reported 93,100 cubic meters of peat was produced in 2012; output was reported only by volume.² A production estimate was unavailable for Alaska for 2013. Florida and Minnesota were the leading producing States, in order of quantity harvested. Reed-sedge peat accounted for approximately 78% of the total volume produced followed by sphagnum moss, 16%. About 90% 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>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013^e</u>
Production	609	628	568	488	480
Commercial sales	644	605	595	484	460
Imports for consumption	906	947	982	911	950
Exports	77	69	49	76	53
Consumption, apparent ³	1,440	1,560	1,500	1,240	1,400
Price, average value, f.o.b. mine, dollars per ton	23.24	24.39	22.73	24.44	24.00
Stocks, producer, yearend	149	100	133	218	200
Employment, mine and plant, number ^e	610	610	600	580	560
Net import reliance ⁴ as a percentage of apparent consumption	58	60	61	61	66

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2009–12): Canada, 97%; and other, 3%.

<u>Tariff:</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u>
	Peat	2703.00.0000	<u>12–31–13</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 480,000 tons per year and imported peat from Canada to account for more than 69% of domestic consumption.

In Canada's eastern and central regions, peat harvest was below average for the 2013 season. A late and interrupted start to the harvest season and wet weather in late summer decreased the peat production. For Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the peat harvest was about average, while Alberta's peat harvest was below average.

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." Reserve data for Belarus was revised based on information reported by The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

	Mine production		Reserves ⁵
	2012	2013 ^e	
United States	488	480	150,000
Belarus	3,250	3,300	2,600,000
Canada	973	1,200	720,000
Estonia	927	930	60,000
Finland	4,760	4,760	6,000,000
Germany	3,050	3,000	(⁶)
Ireland	1,950	1,950	(⁶)
Latvia	1,380	1,380	76,000
Lithuania	386	380	190,000
Moldova	475	480	(⁶)
Norway	440	440	(⁶)
Poland	736	760	(⁶)
Russia	1,300	1,300	1,000,000
Sweden	3,300	3,300	(⁶)
Ukraine	735	740	(⁶)
Other countries	600	600	1,400,000
World total (rounded)	24,700	25,000	12,000,000

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.⁷

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 physicochemical 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., July 19, 2013.

³Defined as production + imports – exports + adjustments for industry stock changes.

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

⁵See Appendix C for resource/reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

⁶Included with "Other countries."

⁷Lappalainen, Eino, 1996, Global peat resources: Jyvaskyla, Finland, International Peat Society, p. 55.