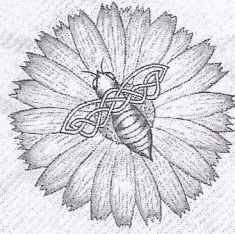


# Natural Kitchen Gardens



Gortbreac,

Tráí,

Co. Chiarraí

20/20/2020

**Submission for the review of the use of peat in the horticultural industry:**

**A chara**

Please find below my submission for the review of the use of peat in the horticultural industry.  
Please let me know that you have received this submission and keep me up to date on it's progress.

Mise me meas

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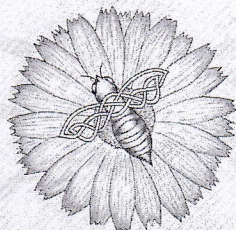
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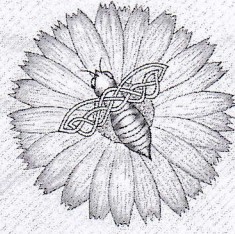
## Public Consultation Questions for the review of the use of peat in the horticultural industry 2020.

### A. What are your views on what more could be done to support and enable the switch to peat free horticulture at professional crop production level and consumer level?

- Make Irish made organic compost available for sale all over the country, not only in specialised shops
- Support people who are making the compost financially as it may appear to initially cost more than peat
- Put the calculations on the compost bag, in terms of carbon footprint, reduction in landfill/incineration waste etc, as it is converted to organic compost
- Have a campaign to show the benefits of using this compost, in terms of the current 'Climate & Biodiversity Emergency', as declared by our Government in 2019
- Connect the dots – our resources are precious and finite. Waste must be converted into an alternative product or into energy
- Closed loops – we must incentivise and assist in developing plans for producers of peat to real sustainable compost products or energy, as close to where the material is being produced as possible
- We must also always consider the embedded energy that it takes to produce and distribute these products, to ensure real sustainability
- We must take a '**whole systems approach**' to this and not see it in isolation from plant and food production on farms, market gardens and nurseries



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## B. What are your views on alternatives to the use of peat in the Horticultural Industry (from, for example, the perspective of the professional grower or consumer/amateur gardener)?

- We need to become self-sufficient in the production of compost
- On-farm/market garden composting needs to be promoted
- Leaf compost is a very under-used material and is an excellent peat substitute. Currently leaves are seen as waste material – they need to be re-directed out of the waste stream and into compostable material
- Same applies to woody material
- There are various composting systems that can be used, once they are appropriate to the site and material supplied, eg. windrows, anaerobic digesters, bokashi fermentation, wormeries, etc.
- There is no point in importing materials for these systems – we must use materials produced in Ireland

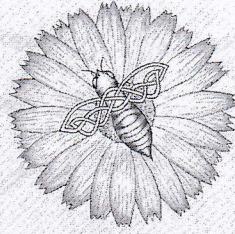
## C. What are your views on whether Ireland should cut back or cease the export of peat for use outside of Ireland even if this would result in job losses in Ireland?

- A climate and biodiversity emergency has been declared by our government
- We cannot keep doing 'business as usual'. We have to change how we use our ecosystem services and the value that we put on peatlands
- Peatlands store water, help to prevent flooding, sequester and store carbon, as well as being home to many plants and animals that have an intrinsic right to live there too. Many are protected under law
- The loss of these habitats and ecosystem services is a reflection of short term thinking
- Alternative employment can be established through creating alternative composting production systems, ecosystem protection, restoration, re-establishment and education
- This action also support the Global Goals:
  - No. 12 Responsible Production & Consumption
  - No. 13 Climate Action
  - No. 14 Life on Land





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**D. Do you consider that a working group should be established to advise on how best to overcome the barriers to reducing peat use in professional horticultural crop production and in the amateur horticultural market?**

- Yes, a working group should be established

**E. If you are in favour of the establishment of a working group, which stakeholder groups do you think should be represented on it?**

- Stop Food Waste
- Irish Organic Growers Association
- Regenerative Land Alliance
- An t-Ionad Glas, The Organic College, Dromcollogher
- Transition Kerry
- Irish Seed Savers Association
- VOICE Ireland
- Cultivate, Cloughjordan Eco-Village
- The Organic Centre, Rossinver, Co. Leitrim
- Native Woodland Trust
- Irish Peatland Conservation Council
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- Fionnuala Fallon (Irish Times Gardening Column)
- National Botanical Gardens
- If I think of more, I will send them on to you!

**F. How do you think that those involved in harvesting peat for horticulture could be compensated for any loss arising from a cessation of this activity (for example, on the basis of the profit loss arising or related to the value in ecosystem services retained/provided)?**

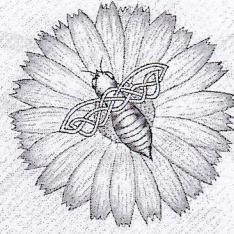
- Through payments similar to those are made to farmers
- The payments should be in lieu of the ecosystem services that the land is providing (habitats, water storage, flooding defense, carbon sequestration and storage)
- Potential for education programmes, with workers being trained to deliver educational programmes both in an in-house and outreach capacity
- These people should be held up as 'guardians of ecosystems', and value be put on this kind of work into the future

**G. How do you think that those involved in harvesting peat for horticulture could be guided towards alternative activities, for example, developing an environmentally suitable alternative material that could replace peat in professional horticultural crop production?**

- Through research into what other countries are doing, including some site visits or use online webinars to hold meetings
- Replicating these projects, with both site and material appropriate plans and developments



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- Retraining and upskilling with educational programmes about composting, habitat protection and restoration
- This complies with government targets of climate action and a 'just transition'
- This will involve funding, resources and support being provided. There are organisations such as NOTS (National Organic Training Skillsnet) who are active in this area
- Native woodlands can be planted in this land also – there are a number of grants for these planting programmes
- There is a real need for community owned energy schemes and these could to be partnered and incentivised as a viable alternative (Kerry Sustainable Energy Co-op)

## H. What do you consider the value of peatlands to be to (please score out of 100):

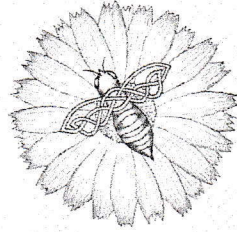
carbon storage	10
nature conservation	30
the provision of ecosystem services	30
the economy	10
social and cultural needs	10
	100

## I. In your opinion should the use of peat within (i) the amateur horticultural market and (ii) the professional horticultural industry be phased out over the next 3, 5, 10, 15 or 20 years and if so, how should this be done bearing in mind the potential job losses and the difficulties with alternative growing media?

- 3-5 year period
- This process should have started 20 years ago – now we are in an 'emergency', so we cannot take this process slowly!
- If the right supports are given to implement a whole systems approach, it can be done
- There can be creative solutions – bring the stakeholders together within this year, create a plan and start putting it into action immediately
- Make sure that the real costs are put in – the current cost (with all embedded costs included, including air miles/carbon/water use/chemicals, fertilisers, waste disposal, etc.). This is the only way that we can see the true environmental costs of current production methods. Again this currently does not comply with current climate and biodiversity action policy



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## J. Does more need to be done to educate and build consumer awareness of peat free products which are available at retail level?

- Yes absolutely
- There needs to be a campaign, similar to the '**All Ireland Pollinator Plan**'. This would let people know the benefits of sustainably produced compost
- It would also highlight the role of peatlands and bogs and why we need to protect and restore these ecosystems
- Plants could be labeled that have been grown in this compost
- A symbol could be on the compost bags, showing how it is made
- We have to move away from a 'cheap everything' model. Many people involved in gardening/horticulture would not want to be producing and growing knowing that their purchases or practices are causing harm
- Tidy Towns, communities, schools and other groups would benefit as it ties in with their project sustainability and environmental plans
- Please contact me about this if there is to be a stakeholders meeting, as I would be happy to give more input

Mise le meas

