

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 \$16.0 million in 2010. Peat was harvested and processed by about 38 companies in 12 of the conterminous States. The Alaska Department of Commerce, Office of Minerals Development, which conducted its own canvass of producers, reported 182,000 cubic meters of peat was produced in 2009; output was reported only by volume.² A production estimate was unavailable for Alaska for 2010. Florida, Minnesota, and Maine were the leading producing States, in order of quantity harvested. Reed-sedge peat accounted for approximately 84% of the total volume produced, followed by sphagnum moss, 8%, hypnum moss, 6%, and humus, 2%. About 97% 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>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010^e</u>
Production	551	635	615	609	612
Commercial sales	734	694	648	644	646
Imports for consumption	924	977	936	906	960
Exports	41	56	^e 57	77	73
Consumption, apparent ³	1,500	1,590	1,440	1,440	1,500
Price, average value, f.o.b. mine, dollars per ton	27.34	25.59	26.42	23.24	24.80
Stocks, producer, yearend	128	98	152	149	150
Employment, mine and plant, number ^e	650	625	620	610	610
Net import reliance ⁴ as a percentage of apparent consumption	63	60	57	58	59

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2006–09): Canada, 97%; and other, 3%.

<u>Tariff: Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u>
Peat	2703.00.0000	<u>12-31-10</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 600,000 tons per year and imported peat from Canada to account for more than 60% of domestic consumption.

The Canadian peat industry had one of its best peat harvests in over the past 2 decades owing to the dry weather. The three major producing provinces—New Brunswick, Alberta, and Quebec—all had a strong production year. Indonesia announced plans for a 2-year moratorium on converting peatlands into palm oil plantations in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The United Kingdom plans a phaseout by 2020 of peat-based composts that would be sold in garden centers as a means of preserving peatlands in that country.

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 ⁵
	2009	2010 ^e	
United States	609	612	150,000
Belarus	2,600	2,600	400,000
Canada	1,130	1,280	720,000
Estonia	828	830	60,000
Finland	9,100	6,700	6,000,000
Ireland	4,300	4,300	(⁶)
Latvia	1,000	1,000	76,000
Lithuania	536	530	190,000
Moldova	475	475	(⁶)
Russia	1,300	1,300	1,000,000
Sweden	1,280	1,280	(⁶)
Ukraine	360	450	(⁶)
Other countries	<u>1,460</u>	<u>1,460</u>	<u>1,400,000</u>
World total (rounded)	25,000	23,000	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. Reserves 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 physiochemical properties of peat limit substitution alternatives.

^eEstimated.

¹See Appendix A for conversion to short tons.

²Hughes, R.A., Szumigala, D.J., and Harbo, L.A., 2010, Alaska’s mineral industry 2009—A summary: Alaska Department of Natural Resources Information Circular 60, 15 p.

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.