

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 \$12.4 million in 2016. Peat was harvested and processed by about 30 companies in 11 of the conterminous States. Production estimates were unavailable for Alaska for 2015 and 2016. 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 with 12%. About 94% of domestic peat was sold for horticultural use, including general soil improvement, nurseries, and potting soils. Other applications included earthworm culture medium, golf course construction, 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>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016^e</u>
Production	488	465	468	455	460
Commercial sales	484	453	479	460	480
Imports for consumption	909	915	994	1,150	1,050
Exports	75	41	29	28	27
Consumption, apparent ²	1,240	1,380	1,390	1,620	1,480
Price, average value, f.o.b. mine, dollars per ton	24.44	25.37	24.97	28.37	27.00
Stocks, producer, yearend	218	174	222	179	180
Employment, mine and plant, number ^e	580	560	550	550	550
Net import reliance ³ as a percentage of apparent consumption	61	66	66	72	69

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2012–15): Canada, 96%; and other, 4%.

<u>Tariff:</u> Item	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u>
Peat	2703.00.0000	<u>12–31–16</u> Free.

Depletion Allowance: 5% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

PEAT

Events, Trends, and Issues: Peat is an important component of plant-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 500,000 tons per year and imported peat from Canada to account for more than 60% of domestic consumption.

The 2016 peat harvest season resulted in below expected harvest volumes for most of Canada's production regions. Eastern Canada, the leading producing region, had a wet cool summer, which resulted in a slightly below average peat harvest. The Prairie Provinces experienced about a 20% decrease in the expected peat harvest as a result of poor weather conditions. The peat harvest in Quebec's South Shore was mixed with only some of the peat producers achieving their expected peat harvest. In Quebec's North Shore, which had unfavorable weather conditions throughout most of the harvest period, had a 25% decrease in the expected peat harvest.

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 ⁴
	2015	2016 ^e	
United States	455	460	150,000
Belarus	1,620	1,800	2,600,000
Canada	1,190	1,200	720,000
Estonia	970	800	60,000
Finland	7,470	6,500	6,000,000
Germany	3,000	3,000	(⁵)
Ireland	4,100	4,100	(⁵)
Latvia	1,210	1,200	190,000
Lithuania	553	550	190,000
Moldova	480	480	(⁵)
Norway	500	500	(⁵)
Poland	600	900	(⁵)
Russia	1,300	1,300	1,000,000
Sweden	3,600	3,600	(⁵)
Ukraine	580	600	(⁵)
Other countries ^e	690	690	1,400,000
World total (rounded)	28,300	28,000	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. 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.⁶

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.

²Defined as production + imports – exports + adjustments for industry stock changes.

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

⁴See [Appendix C](#) for resource and reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

⁵Included with "Other countries."

⁶Lappalainen, Eino, 1996, Global peat resources: Jyvaskyla, Finland, International Peat Society, p. 55.