

PEAT

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated free on board (f.o.b.) mine value of marketable peat production in the conterminous United States was \$14 million in 2019. Peat was harvested and processed by about 28 companies in 12 conterminous States. Florida, Michigan, and Minnesota were the leading producing States, in order of quantity harvested. Reed-sedge peat accounted for approximately 87% of the total volume produced, followed by sphagnum moss with 10%. Domestic peat applications included earthworm culture medium, golf course construction, mixed fertilizers, mushroom culture, nurseries, 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.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019^e
Production	455	441	498	479	470
Sales by producers	460	443	515	545	540
Imports for consumption	1,150	1,130	1,150	1,200	1,100
Exports	28	30	30	37	40
Consumption, apparent ¹	1,620	1,590	1,520	1,670	1,600
Price, average value, f.o.b. mine, dollars per ton	28.39	31.97	27.55	25.88	28.50
Stocks, producer, yearend	179	125	222	196	180
Employment, mine and plant, number ^e	550	550	540	540	500
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	72	72	67	71	70

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2015–18): Canada, 95%; and other, 5%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12–31–19
Peat	2703.00.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 5% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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 470,000 tons per year and imported peat from Canada is expected to continue to account for more than 70% of domestic consumption. Imports for 2019 were estimated to have decreased to 1.1 million tons from 1.2 million tons in 2018, and exports were estimated to have increased to about 40,000 tons from 37,000 tons in 2018. Peat stocks were estimated to have decreased in 2019 owing to a wet peat harvesting season causing a decrease in peat production in some parts of the country. Based on estimated world production for 2019, the world's leading peat producers were, in descending order of production, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Belarus, and Sweden.

Africa's first peat-fired powerplant in Gishoma, Rwanda, produced energy at its 15-megawatt-capacity facility, which added to the national power grid in 2019. Another peat-fired powerplant was under construction in Gisagara, Rwanda, and was expected to be operational in 2020. The peat-fired powerplants are anticipated to increase the national power capacity by about 40% when fully operational, bringing Rwanda closer to its goal of energy independence.

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In other parts of the world, concerns about climate change prompted several countries to plan to decrease or eliminate the use of peat, owing to peatland's ability to act as a carbon sink. Ireland's peat production was expected to decrease over the coming years owing to its transition to alternative fuel sources. The country was aiming to have at least 80% of its fossil fuel sector employment transitioned to the renewable energy sector by 2025. Ireland announced in 2019 that it planned to stop all peat harvesting by 2028, 2 years ahead of the previously announced schedule. In 2019, Finland announced its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2035. To achieve this, peat production will be phased out in favor for other forms of noncarbon energy. Presently, about 40% of Finland's energy consumption is supplied by peat and other fossil fuels. Several European countries, including Belarus, Ireland, and Sweden, were planning or implementing peatland restoration projects to help combat greenhouse gas emissions and restore wildlife habitats. These initiatives were expected to decrease peat production across Europe in the future.

World Mine Production and Reserves: Reserves for countries that reported by volume only and had insufficient data for conversion to tons were combined and included with "Other countries." Reserves for Latvia were updated with information from company reports.

	Mine production		Reserves ³
	2018	2019 ^e	
United States	479	470	150,000
Belarus	2,620	2,600	2,600,000
Canada	1,240	1,300	720,000
Estonia	1,030	1,000	60,000
Finland	9,970	10,000	6,000,000
Germany	3,800	4,000	(⁴)
Ireland	3,000	3,000	(⁴)
Latvia	1,900	1,900	230,000
Lithuania	510	500	210,000
Poland	700	700	(⁴)
Russia	800	800	1,000,000
Sweden	2,450	2,500	(⁴)
Ukraine	590	600	(⁴)
United Kingdom	700	—	(⁴)
Other countries ^e	610	600	1,400,000
World total (rounded)	30,400	30,000	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. peat resources are located in undisturbed areas of Alaska.

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 in most applications.

^eEstimated. — Zero.

¹Defined as production + imports – exports + adjustments for industry stock changes.

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

³See Appendix C for resource and reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

⁴Included with "Other countries."