

## PEAT

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

**Domestic Production and Use:** The estimated free on board (f.o.b.) mine value of sold marketable peat production in the conterminous United States was \$13 million in 2020. Peat was harvested and processed by 30 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 93% of the total volume produced, followed by sphagnum moss with 3%. 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.

<b>Salient Statistics—United States:</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020<sup>e</sup></b>
Production	441	498	477	456	430
Sales by producers	443	515	545	556	540
Imports for consumption	1,130	1,150	1,200	1,160	1,400
Exports	30	30	37	46	50
Consumption, apparent <sup>1</sup>	1,590	1,520	1,670	1,480	1,800
Price, average value, f.o.b. mine, dollars per ton	31.97	27.55	25.88	24.59	24.60
Stocks, producer, yearend	125	222	196	280	250
Employment, mine and plant, number <sup>e</sup>	550	540	540	540	530
Net import reliance <sup>2</sup> as a percentage of apparent consumption	72	67	71	69	76

**Recycling:** None.

**Import Sources (2016–19):** Canada, 96%; and other, 4%.

<b>Tariff:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Normal Trade Relations 12–31–20</b>
	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 430,000 tons per year, and imported peat from Canada is expected to continue to account for more than 70% of domestic consumption. Imports for 2020 were estimated to have increased to 1.4 million tons from 1.2 million tons in 2019, and exports were estimated to have increased to about 50,000 tons from 46,000 tons in 2019. Peat stocks were estimated to have decreased in 2020 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 2020, the world's leading peat producers were, in descending order of production, Finland, Germany, Belarus, Sweden, Ireland, and Latvia.

## PEAT

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 planned to stop all peat harvesting by 2028, 2 years ahead of the previously announced schedule. In 2020, Finland continued to work toward 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 Estonia and Latvia were revised based on information from company reports.

	Mine production		Reserves <sup>3</sup>
	2019	2020 <sup>e</sup>	
United States	456	430	150,000
Belarus	2,670	2,600	2,600,000
Canada	1,260	1,300	720,000
Estonia	890	900	59,000
Finland	11,800	10,000	6,000,000
Germany	4,200	4,000	( <sup>4</sup> )
Ireland	1,730	2,000	( <sup>4</sup> )
Latvia	2,200	1,900	220,000
Lithuania	500	500	210,000
Poland	870	700	( <sup>4</sup> )
Russia	909	800	1,000,000
Sweden	3,000	2,500	( <sup>4</sup> )
Ukraine	685	680	( <sup>4</sup> )
Other countries <sup>e</sup>	730	730	1,400,000
World total (rounded)	31,900	29,000	12,000,000

**World Resources:**<sup>3</sup> 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 each of those countries. 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.

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. — Zero

<sup>1</sup>Defined as production + imports – exports + adjustments for industry stock changes.

<sup>2</sup>Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for industry stock changes.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix C for resource and reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

<sup>4</sup>Included with "Other countries."