

VERMICULITE

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Domestic Production and Use: Two companies with mining and processing facilities in South Carolina and Virginia produced approximately 100,000 tons of vermiculite concentrate; data have been rounded to the nearest hundred thousand tons to avoid disclosing company proprietary data. Most vermiculite concentrate, whether produced in the United States or imported, was shipped to 12 exfoliating plants operated by 10 companies in seven States. The end uses for exfoliated vermiculite were estimated to be agriculture, 30%; lightweight concrete aggregates (including cement premixes, concrete, and plaster), 16%; insulation, 15%; and other, 39%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025^e
Production ^{1, 2}	100	100	100	100	100
Imports for consumption ^e	32	24	50	40	38
Exports ^e	10	8	8	8	5
Consumption:					
Apparent, concentrate ^{e, 3}	120	120	140	130	130
Reported, exfoliated	68	67	59	59	55
Price, range of value, concentrate, ex-plant, dollars per metric ton	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, number ^e	70	70	70	70	70
Net import reliance ⁴ as a percentage of apparent consumption ^e	18	14	30	24	25

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (2021–24): South Africa, 46%; Brazil, 43%; Zimbabwe, 6%; Uganda, 5%; and other, <1%.

Tariff:	Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12–31–25
	Vermiculite, perlite, and chlorites, unexpanded	2530.10.0000	Free.
	Exfoliated vermiculite, expanded clays, foamed slag, and similar expanded materials	6806.20.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 14% (domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

Events, Trends, and Issues: Trade data for vermiculite concentrate are collected within the group “vermiculite, perlite and chlorites, unexpanded” by the U.S. Census Bureau. Domestic exports and imports for consumption of vermiculite were estimated based on information published by the U.S. Census Bureau and adjusted by the U.S. Geological Survey based on average unit value, countries known to produce vermiculite, and likely port destinations to eliminate other minerals reported in the same group. United States imports were an estimated 38,000 tons in 2025, compared with an estimated 40,000 tons in 2024. In 2025, most imports came from Brazil and South Africa.

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Global vermiculite production was estimated to be 460,000 tons in 2025. South Africa produced an estimated 160,000 tons of vermiculite, which accounted for 35% of the global production. The United States and Brazil produced an estimated 100,000 tons (22%) and 50,000 tons (11%), respectively. The remaining 32% of global production was from nine countries.

World Mine Production and Reserves:

	Mine production		Reserves ⁵
	2024	2025 ^e	
United States	1,2100	1,2100	25,000
Brazil	^e 53	50	6,600
Bulgaria	^e 10	10	NA
China	^e 39	40	2,900
India	^e 2	2	1,600
Mexico	(⁶)	(⁶)	NA
Russia	37	40	NA
South Africa	163	160	14,000
Turkey	13	10	11,000
Uganda	^e 24	20	NA
Uzbekistan	^e 1	1	NA
Zimbabwe	^e 28	30	NA
World total (rounded)	470	460	NA

World Resources:⁵ In addition to the producing mines in South Carolina and Virginia, there are vermiculite occurrences in Colorado, Nevada, North Carolina, Texas, and Wyoming that contain estimated resources of 2 million to 3 million tons. Significant deposits have been reported in Australia, Russia, Uganda, and some other countries, but reserve and resource information comes from many sources, and in most cases, it is not clear whether the numbers refer to vermiculite alone or vermiculite plus other minerals and host rock and overburden.

Substitutes: Expanded perlite is a substitute for exfoliated vermiculite in lightweight concrete and plaster. Other denser but less costly alternatives in these applications include expanded clay, shale, slag, and slate. Alternate materials for loose-fill fireproofing insulation include fiberglass, perlite, and slag wool. In agriculture, substitutes include bark and other plant materials, peat, perlite, sawdust, and synthetic soil conditioners.

^eEstimated. NA Not available.

¹Concentrate sold or used by producers.

²Data are rounded to the nearest hundred thousand tons to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

³Defined as concentrate sold or used by producers + imports – exports.

⁴Defined as imports – exports.

⁵See Appendix C for resource and reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

⁶Less than ½ unit.