

The Growing Media Initiative

Background to the Growing Media Initiative (GMI)

The Growing Media Initiative is a scheme developed by the Horticultural Trades Association in conjunction with the Growing Media Association, DIY and Garden Centre retailers, Defra, the RSPB and the Royal Horticultural Society.

The GMI has been developed in order to help the UK horticultural industry meet government targets for the reduction of peat use. Peatlands are an important habitat and carbon store globally and it is now widely recognised that it is important to minimise further drainage of peat bogs and peat extraction.

The GMI scheme aims to increase awareness about the need to protect the world's peatlands and the need therefore to use more sustainable materials for growing plants and improving the soil in gardens.

Scope of the Growing Media Initiative (GMI)

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1997) stated that the horticultural industry should aim for a minimum of 40% of total market requirements (soil improver plus growing media products) to be peat-free by 2005 and 90% by 2010.

The industry was pleased to have achieved the Government target to reduce the use of growing media and soil improvers by 40% by 2005. The target of 90% reduction by 2010 was always viewed as unrealistic by the industry but, as a result of significant investment and commitment to peat reduction, considerable further progress has been made.

The Growing Media Initiative welcomes the new proposed Government target for amateur growing media products to be peat-free by 2020. Whilst a very challenging target the industry believes, with the right support from Government, it can be achieved.

The GMI sets challenging goals for its members, enables proactive businesses to differentiate themselves in the market place, rewards progress and remains the only mechanism that exists to genuinely speed the process of peat reduction.

GMI Scheme Details

The GMI Scheme is designed for retailers and manufacturers of growing media and soil improver to monitor reductions in peat use achieved by these businesses. The initial focus is on bagged products of growing media and soil improvers sold to amateur gardeners in the UK retail market.

The main bagged products are growing media such as multipurpose compost, growbags and soil improvers/mulches such as bark mulch. The growing media used by professional growers which is sold as part of plant products by retailers will be included in the scheme at a later date.

Provisional GMI membership is open to retailers and manufacturers of growing media and soil improvers who are committed to achieving 90% peat replacement in their business and who

are currently operating at a minimum of 20% replacement in retail products. They must produce an annual Action Plan and demonstrate year on year progress.

Full GMI membership is awarded to businesses that have achieved 55% peat reduction in retail bagged products and that have an audited Action Plan detailing progress and how they are publicising their goals on peat replacement both internally and to customers.

Gold GMI membership will be awarded to those businesses that have achieved the Defra 90% peat replacement target.

The GMI scheme is managed by an elected Steering Group and audited by independent third party auditors.

Growing Media Initiative – Steering Group

1. Chair – HTA Tim Briercliffe - HTA
2. Secretary – HTA Alec Turnbull - HTA
3. Retailer – DIY multiple George Padelopoulos - B&Q
4. Retailer – Independent Garden Centre Caroline Owen - Scotsdales
5. Retailer – Multiple Garden Centre Susan MacDonald - Dobbies
6. Manufacturer – Chair of GMA Martin Breddy – Scotts Miracle-Gro
7. Manufacturer – GMA member Jamie Robinson – Westland
8. Non-Governmental Organisations Paul Alexander – RHS
9. Government Judith Stuart – DEFRA
10. Inspector representative Jill England - ADAS
11. Catherine Dawson - Melcourt Industries
12. Advisory Member Oily Watts – RSPB

Growing Media Initiative – Members

Gold Member

Vital Earth <http://www.vitalearth.tv>

Melcourt Industries <http://www.melcourt.co.uk>

Full Members

Westland Horticulture <http://www.gardenhealth.com>

Homebase <http://www.homebase.co.uk>

White Moss Horticulture <http://www.whitemoss.co.uk>

Aylett Nurseries <http://www.aylettnurseries.co.uk>

Provisional Members

Scotts Miracle-Gro <http://www.scotts.com/smg>

B&Q <http://www.diy.com>

Bord NA Mona <http://www.bnm.ie/corporate/index.jsp>

Dobbies <http://www.dobbies.com/>

Charity Member

RHS <http://www.rhs.org.uk>

Growing Media Initiative – Applicants

- Scotsdales
- Garden & Leisure

GMI Rules and Procedures

The GMI Rules and Procedures provide a competitive guide to the background and membership requirements of the Growing Media Initiative. The attached appendices provide guidance on compliance with the Scheme and details in the following areas:

- GMI peat sourcing policy
- Products included in the Scheme
- Action plans – Retailers and Growing Media Manufacturers
- Annual information required
- Use of the GMI logo

A full copy of the Rules and Procedures can be downloaded from this site or obtained by contacting the Horticultural Trades Association.

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