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Potting soils for the future.

Market demand or customer preference will influence the composition of potting soils, on short term and in the future. Some years ago environmental groups in the UK started up a campaign against the use of peat in potting soil; the "peat-free" campaign or peatering out.

In the Netherlands growers, exporters, substrate producers and others involved started a project called "New Growing Media". The goal of the project was to determine, under practical circumstances, the possibilities of substrates without peat (or low in peat content). Conclusions will be high lighted during the presentation, and yes, for a number of crops it is possible to grow good products on substrates with low peat content. At the other hand a number of crops showed minor results.

Before changes take place, it's of vital importance that growers and substrate suppliers are able to specify the needs of e crop and culture. The specifications should be met by the alternative substrate. There are various constituents which can be used as addition to peat and/or instead of peat. The alternative substrate should function at least as good as the original (peat) substrate. Minor results (increased waste, lower quality) would result in a negative environmental balance.

Growers and suppliers should follow the 5-step evaluation to come to an alternative substrate; well considered and the best fit for the crop.