



# **SUSTAINABILITY STARTS IN THE SUBSTRATE**

**INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION OF SUSTAINABLE  
AND CLIMATE-FRIENDLY PEAT SUBSTITUTES**

**HORTICERT.ORG**



## WHO WE ARE

HORTICERT is an international certification system that ensures ecological, social and economic sustainability along the entire supply chain of peat substitutes used in potting soils and substrates.

Under HORTICERT, peat substitutes such as green compost, wood fibers and coconut-based products, but also any other peat substitutes, can be certified.

HORTICERT thereby actively promotes sustainable and climate-friendly horticulture with reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

## OUR VISION

A sustainable, largely peat-free growing media industry with reduced greenhouse gas emissions to preserve and restore peatlands as valuable ecosystems.

## OUR MISSION

Ensure transparency along international supply chains of peat substitutes to support end consumers and businesses in making sustainable purchasing decisions.

In this way, HORTICERT supports the growing media industry on its way to a largely peat-free hobby and professional horticulture.





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## WHY REPLACE PEAT?

Globally, peat still represents the most used raw material for potting soils and substrates. However, the extraction of peat in drained peatland is associated with high greenhouse gas emissions.

Due to continuing decomposition of peat in the substrate, additional greenhouse gas emissions are released during the use phase. As a result, peat often has a worse carbon footprint than many peat substitutes.



## PEATLAND PROTECTION IS CLIMATE PROTECTION

Intact peatlands bind six times more carbon than forests of the same area and are therefore of great importance for climate protection.

Besides their important role as carbon sinks, peatlands also represent a habitat for rare species that have adapted to the extreme conditions of peatlands over thousands of years. Intact peatlands are therefore an important factor in biodiversity conservation.

## HORTICERT CERTIFICATION

Under HORTICERT, companies can be certified along the entire value chain from the extraction of raw materials to the production of the final substrate.

Companies that can be certified include agricultural and forestry businesses, first gathering points, processing plants, Intermediaries and growing media mixing plants.

## CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Interested potential system users go through the following process:

- ✓ Selection of a certification body
- ✓ Registration with HORTICERT
- ✓ Audit via selected certification body
- ✓ Issuance of the certificate
- ✓ Approval by HORTICERT

# THE PROJECT HORTICERT

The project for the “Development and implementation of an international certification system for peat substitutes” is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) based on a decision by the Federal German Parliament. Under the leadership of the Fachagentur für Nachhaltige Rohstoffe e.V. (Agency for Renewable Resources), Meo Carbon Solutions GmbH is carrying out the project.

The project was commissioned based on the German government’s Climate Action Plan 2050 and the peat reduction strategy published by the BMEL in July 2022.

According to the peat reduction strategy, the use of peat in hobby horticulture is to be ended in Germany by 2026 and reduced as far as possible in professional horticulture by 2030.

By certifying peat substitutes, HORTICERT supports the reduction of peat in growing media and ensures the use of sustainable and climate-friendly alternatives.

After the project funding ends in 2025, HORTICERT will continue as a stand-alone, independent certification system.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE!**

**[www.horticert.org](http://www.horticert.org) | [info@horticert.org](mailto:info@horticert.org)**



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