From Nursery to Field: Practical Lessons from Peat-Reduced Growing Media

PEATLESS Project
Practice Abstract No. 1

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The problem

Growers may fear that **reducing peat compromises transplant quality, mechanical transplanting or field performance**. Differences observed during nursery production may therefore lead to promising peat-reduced media being rejected too early.

The solution

Previous trials indicate **peat-reduced growing media can support reliable vegetable transplant production** when substrate selection and crop management are adapted. Differences observed during nursery production should not be assessed in isolation as final crop performance depends on transplant quality, irrigation, fertilisation, site conditions and management after transplanting. **Evaluating the full production chain** is important when assessing peat-reduced growing media.

Benefits

A **full chain assessment** gives a more realistic picture of substrate performance and supports informed adoption of peat-reduced media.

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Practical Recommendations

- Test new media under commercial conditions before large-scale adoption.
- Involve both nurseries and growers in the evaluation, as management during seedling production and after transplanting can influence final crop performance.
- Assess overall transplant quality rather than peat content alone.
- Adapt irrigation and nutrition to substrate characteristics and select media with sufficient physical stability for nursery handling and mechanical transplanting.

About PEATLESS and this Practice Abstract

This practice abstract was elaborated in the framework of the PEATLESS project, based on the EIP AGRI practice abstract format. © 2023
Project dates: from May 2025 to April 2028.
Goal: To characterise sectorial needs at selected systems towards tailoring PEATLESS alternative substrate blends to overcome identified barriers for peat reduction in horticulture.

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