



Over the next few months as peatland restoration projects battle the elements to finish work on the ground before making way for breeding birds, the turning of the seasons brings a more sinister event in the UK peatland calendar.

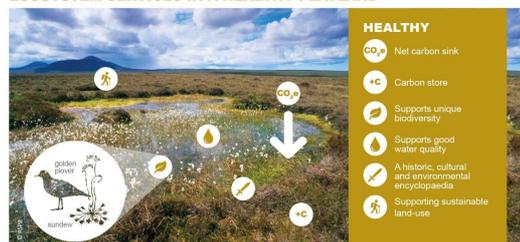
As the weather warms UK gardeners are heading out in number to buy compost to nourish their borders; grow-bags to nurture tomatoes and bedding plants all rooted in peat. In the anticipation of a healthy growing season thoughts of what's in the bag, where it came from and what the process of its harvesting leaves behind is all too often over-looked. This edition of our newsletter has a focus on the link between peat and horticulture.

With thanks to Ben McCarthy, *Plantlife International*; Catherine Dawson, *Melcourt Industries Limited*; Averil Stewart, *Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow* and all those who kindly contributed content.

Moving towards a future of peat-free products

Advances in peat-free horticultural products; shifts in International policy towards more sustainable products and continuing dialogue with retailers, horticultural producers, Government and NGOs could support a speedy switch to peat-free products that would help meet the environmentally responsible demands of society. [Read full article...](#)

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN A HEALTHY PEATLAND



IMPACT ON ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN A DAMAGED PEATLAND





The pain of a peat-free UK?

30 years ago Plantlife's then CEO Jane Smart, now IUCN's Global Director of IUCN's Biodiversity Conservation Group and Director of IUCN's Global Species Programme, launched an appeal to protect our peatlands, in what was Plantlife's first campaign.

As Plantlife celebrates its 30th birthday much has changed however the drive to protect our special peatlands remains a critical environmental cause...

... An outright ban on the sale of peat for horticultural use seems the most sensible way forward. It's a no brainer and would result in: halting the destruction of carbon-rich soils; helping meet 'Net Zero' climate change targets; stopping the destruction of precious wildlife habitat; stopping an industrial practice that has no place in a modern society. [Read full article...](#)



Peat-free alternatives - Promoting long-term growth and sustainable business

Peat as a growing medium ingredient is becoming increasingly unacceptable and this has led in recent years to more and more use of peat-free growing media... Although it has been amply demonstrated that peat-free media can perform just as well as their peat-based counterparts, a major barrier to their more widespread uptake is price...although there can be significant cost savings when using them bringing them closer to price parity...



Change is happening slowly but at [Melcourt](#) we are pleased to see that Defra are now consulting on the 'further measures' for reducing peat use that were mentioned in the [25 year plan for the](#)

Peat-free planters help Linlithgow win Britain in Bloom Best Town Award 2018.

Linlithgow, Scotland was delighted to be awarded a Gold and to win the Best Town Category in the Britain in Bloom UK Finals in 2018. Horticultural achievements were demonstrated with year round beds, borders, planters and hanging baskets. Environmental Responsibility was captured in part by the use of peat-free composts as soil improvers, particularly for floral planters and barrels. These composts continue to be trialled for hanging baskets where watering regimes need to be monitored carefully. Promotion of peat-free compost and the importance of protecting our precious peatlands was the theme for a prominent bed from June 2017 - May 2018. This display attracted considerable attention and eventually transferred to Beecraigs Country Park where hopefully one day it can be reinstated with its story boards and sculptures.

Averil Stewart



Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow

Our news

Extent of UK Peatland under restoration management.



Have you delivered peatland restoration in the UK between 2014 - 2019? *

Yes

No

NEXT

The [UK Peatland Strategy](#) set a target of two million hectares of peatland in good condition, under restoration or being sustainably managed by 2040.

To track progress against this target we need to update existing estimates. We are asking the peatland community across the UK to help us do this.

We are aiming to collate spatially explicit data on the extent of peatland restoration taking place from 2014 to 2019, including active re-wetting as well as other forms of peatland management that

may be contributing to 'passive' re-wetting (e.g. by lowering evapotranspiration losses).

Please complete our short survey & share the link. <https://goo.gl/forms/1uWytxD63nc7uEBT2...>

Please contact info@iucn.org.uk with any queries.

Partner highlights

UK peatland experts link with EU



A new group has been launched that will exchange expertise across Europe to help in the fight against climate change and restore some of our most vital habitats. Launched by the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership in collaboration with environmental network Eurosite, the group will bring together peatland restoration experts to share the science and practice behind the work they do on sites across Europe. As lead partner of the EU funded Pennine PeatLIFE project, staff from the North Pennines AONB Partnership will chair the new Peatland Restoration Working Group. [More](#)

Moors for the Future Partnership biggest ever delivery season continues



Moors for the Future Partnership is in the middle of its biggest ever delivery season, valued at over £6 million in the last financial year - a year in which it has also engaged with 5,000 people. So far this conservation season, over half a million sphagnum plugs have been planted; over 10,000 bags of heather brash have spread onto the moors; and 2,500 dams have been built in gullies. And there's still the rest of the season to go! The annual dipwell monitoring recorded 8000 dipwell measurements, adding to 7 previous years of monitoring meaning we now have tens of thousands of dipwell measurements!

YPP success on North York Moors

[Yorkshire Peat Partnership](#) recently returned to one of its earlier sites - Glaisdale in the North York Moors - as part of a feasibility study for the Estate's Countryside Stewardship application. The transformation since our restoration work in 2010 was amazing - see the areal pics below. We are hoping to continue the restoration of Glaisdale moor, tackling larger gullies, as part of the Estate's Countryside Stewardship agreement. In the meantime, though, it's exciting to see just what a positive effect our restoration has had on this site. [Read more.](#)





Vacancies - research opportunities and jobs

PhD student, Effects of peatland forestry on water quality

Closing date: March 1st, 2019

Location: Umeå, Sweden

Project title: Side-by-side comparison of the effects of management of old forest ditches on water quality: cleaning vs. ecological restoration vs. left alone [details](#)

Project Officer - Flows to the Future Project

Closing date: Friday 1st March

Location: Forsinard Flows, Highlands

[Further details...](#)

Events

Working with natural processes session at the IALE World Congress 2019

The deadline for submitting abstracts for the Working with Natural Processes session at the IALE World Congress 2019 has been extended to 24th Feb. [Details](#)

Wetscapes

The international WETSCAPES Conference that will be held September 10-13, 2019 in Rostock, Germany, brings together researchers and practitioners that work on any type of fen peatland or on coastal non-peatland wetlands - pristine, artificially drained and rewetted. The abstract submission deadline has been extended until March 15, 2019. Meet some great keynote speakers in a familiar atmosphere. [Details](#)

EUGEO 2019 Galway

This conference will offer participants the opportunity to reflect on and re-imagine futures within the geographical boundary of Europe. The overarching theme will be reflected throughout the conference programme and themed field trips. [Details](#)

New resources

Valuing the benefits of peatland restoration

iCASP has been working with [Pennine Peatlife](#) and [Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#) to produce an interactive User Guide that provides an overview of methods available for valuing the benefits delivered by peatlands and evidence based on existing studies.

By using this tool, you will:

- Better understand which method to apply to value a particular ecosystem service provided by peatlands and how costly/difficult it is to implement
- Support business cases and making investment plans for peatland restoration
- Better understand how to use the estimated values to inform decisions on your restoration plans, for example in cost-benefit analysis
- Strengthen your communication on the social value of peatland to the public and policy makers
- Get access to UK case-study applications and plenty of additional resources

You can download the [User Guide](#). iCASP would appreciate your feedback on how you use the guide and how it benefits your work. Email: icasp@leeds.ac.uk. This will be very valuable to us! More information on this [project](#).

Caring for the hills protects us from flooding says peer reviewed, open access research

New research by the University of Manchester and Moors for the Future Partnership details the findings of the Making Space for Water project. It is published in the Journal of Hydrology X. The research shows that flood control can now be added to the many benefits of restoring damaged peatlands. The paper is peer reviewed and open access, which is hugely important if knowledge and expertise is to be shared and built upon. [Find out more and read the research](#).

In other news...

- [Reduced emissions, preparing for climate change and responding to our growing population](#) – Food and Farming Futures, 10th January
- [Plantwatch: is sphagnum the most underrated plant on Earth?](#) – Guardian, 15th January
- [Heather burning: Its impacts on peat formation and carbon storage](#) - Food and Farming Futures, 15th January
- [Are wildfires getting worse?](#) – Engineering and Technology, 19th January
- [Moorland restoration vital to reduce flooding, according to research](#) –Environment Journal, 25th January
- [Commission to present "new green architecture" for CAP to EU agri ministers](#) – EnviroSolutions, 28th January
- [Can we ditch intensive farming - and still feed the world?](#) – Guardian, 28th January
- [World's three biggest rainforests face year of precarious politics](#) – Climate Home, 28th January
- [Precarious politics threatens rainforests](#) – The Ecologist, 31st January
- [Enjoy Scotland's natural beauty this World Wetlands Day](#) – Scottish Field, 31st January

- [Bishopdale farmers join scheme to beat severe flooding in Yorkshire Dales hotspot](#) – Yorkshire Post, 1st February
- [‘The devastation of human life is in view’: what a burning world tells us about climate change](#) – Guardian, 2nd February
- [Gove stresses green action as companies told to rework their business plans](#) – The Water Report, 3rd February
- [Climate change could wreak havoc on Scottish species](#) - Scotsman, 8th February
- [Stalkers to target 500 red deer in cull to reduce numbers on Carse of Stirling](#) - Daily Record, 12th February
- [Fund to protect Scotland’s nature is launched](#) - Scottish Field, 13th February
- [South West Water partners in £2m peatland restoration project on Bodmin Moor](#) - Water Briefing, 15th February
- [UK Peatland Experts Link with EU](#) - Stackyard, 15th February
- [Yorkshire Water urged: pull plug on shoot leases](#) - Barnsley Chronicle, 17th February

*This list is by no means comprehensive, nor are these stories endorsements from the Programme, but for your information only.

Privacy policy:

We have recently updated our Privacy Policy, in line with recent changes to data protection. Within the policy, we outline why we capture your personal data, what we use it for, and how we keep it safe, to keep you informed and in control. For further information, please visit our website: www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/privacy, or telephone us on: 01904 659570.

Further information:

Header image: Begonias growing in Sylvamix® peat-free professional growing medium for a local authority bedding scheme © Melcourt Industries Ltd.

For information about reports and initiatives referred to in this newsletter please visit: www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org. You are receiving this newsletter as you signed-up. If you would no longer like to receive these emails, please reply to this email letting us know to unsubscribe you

To submit items please email Lyndon: lyndon.marquis@iucn.org.uk

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