Peat Reduction and Responsible Sourcing Policy

1. Policy Statement

Rutland Nursery recognises the significant environmental impact associated with the extraction and use of peat, including carbon emissions, habitat destruction, and biodiversity loss. We are committed to supporting the transition towards peat-free gardening and reducing our reliance on peat-based products across all areas of our business.

While we are not currently fully peat-free, we are actively working towards reducing peat use and increasing the availability and promotion of sustainable alternatives.

2. Our Commitment

We are committed to:

- Progressively reducing the volume of peat-containing products sold and used within our operations
- Increasing the range and availability of high-quality peat-free alternatives
- Supporting customers in making informed, sustainable choices
- Working collaboratively with suppliers to encourage peat reduction and innovation
- Aligning our practices with UK government targets and industry best practice

3. Retail Product Range

- Increase the proportion of peat-free composts and growing media available for sale each year
- Clearly label peat-free and peat-reduced products to help customers make informed choices
- Reduce shelf space allocated to peat-based composts over time
- Prioritise suppliers who offer peat-free or reduced-peat alternatives
- Avoid introducing new peat-based product lines wherever possible

4. Plant Nursery Operations

- Gradually transition nursery-grown plants to peat-free growing media
- Trial and evaluate peat-free alternatives to ensure plant quality and performance
- Work with growers and suppliers who are actively reducing peat use
- Monitor progress and set achievable reduction targets
- Promote a peat-free range of products

5. Supplier Engagement

- Engage with suppliers to understand their peat reduction strategies
- Encourage transparency in growing media composition
- Give preference to suppliers demonstrating clear progress towards peat-free production
- Review supplier performance regularly

6. Customer Awareness and Education

- Provide clear information on the environmental impact of peat use
- Promote the benefits and performance of peat-free composts
- Offer guidance and advice to customers transitioning to peat-free gardening
- Use signage, labelling, and staff knowledge to support customer understanding

7. Staff Training

- Train staff to understand peat-related environmental issues
- Equip staff to confidently advise customers on peat-free alternatives
- Encourage staff involvement in achieving our peat reduction goals

8. Targets and Monitoring

- Set realistic, measurable targets for reducing peat use across retail and nursery operations
- Monitor progress annually and review product ranges accordingly
- Regularly assess customer demand and supplier developments

9. Continuous Improvement

We acknowledge that transitioning away from peat presents practical challenges, including supply, cost, and product performance. However, we are committed to continuous improvement and will adapt our approach as new technologies and alternatives become available.

10. Responsibility

This policy applies to all areas of the business, including management, staff, and suppliers. Senior management is responsible for implementation and review, with all employees expected to support its objectives.