

## A NEW CONCEPT FOR SPHAGNUM SOURCING AND UTILIZATION IN FINLAND – SPHAGNUM HARVESTING FROM FORESTRY-DRAINED NUTRIENT-POOR BOGS

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About 1 Mha of nutrient-poor forestry-drained peatlands are being left aside from forestry-use in Finland. These nutrient-poor sites have undergone relatively small changes in their vegetation composition and peat decomposition after drainage, thus living and partly decomposed Sphagnum and other wetland vegetation still dominates their topsoils.

Harvesting the topsoils (20-30 cm layer) of these drained bogs for growing media production, as well as the other peat-substitute products, followed by restoration has been proposed as one after-use option. A harvesting machine was developed recently and a few tens of hectares of forestry-drained bogs have already been harvested for their topsoil Sphagnum.

Furthermore, the use of harvested Sphagnum as a growing media product has been studied. Future opportunities and challenges in harvesting Sphagnum from forestry-drained bogs for use as a peat-substitute material will be discussed.