

Catering to the greener gardeners of the future

Whether changing their diet and lifestyle or trying to adopt better habits, consumers are making more informed decisions and better choices for their own health and that of the planet. The interest in vegetarian and vegan diets has increased steadily, whilst concern for the environment and the effects of climate change is escalating. Shoppers are actively seeking products that have minimal impact on the environment, from production and the way materials are sourced, right through to what happens to the packaging after use. This is a growing movement in gardening, with demand soaring for sustainably-sourced, plant-based products that work with nature to deliver impressive results. Retailers need to act now and get on board with this emerging category.

What's driving change?

The Covid pandemic has served to further heighten people's awareness of the environment and their own health so, with the nation stuck at home in lockdown, on furlough or ditching their lengthy commute thanks to remote working, the value of outdoor space has never been greater and people have finally found the time to focus on their garden. Demand for allotments skyrocketed and many turned their hand to planting at home, spawning an army of novice growers.

However, this new breed of gardener is doing things differently. They want to garden in a way that works with nature, has the least impact on the planet, but provides all the added health benefits. Yes, people have been opting for organic products for decades now but greener gardening has picked up serious pace and retailers need to recognise a shift in the mindset of many consumers and the emergence of a novel customer with new needs and expectations heading through their doors.

Why is this so important?

In December, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced ambitious new targets for the UK to be net zero by 2050 and leading the way in tackling climate change globally.

According to recent data from the Vegan Society, 32% of Brits believe the government should be promoting vegan and plant-based diets to address the current climate emergency¹.

However, these shoppers aren't just switching to plant-based, planet-friendly diets, they are seeking vegan gardening goods too and this category looks set to expand exponentially.

The eco-savvy consumer expects far more from brands and the merchants they buy from. They will happily vote with their feet and go elsewhere, which is why retailers need to review their offer and make sure they have organic and sustainable plant-based alternatives on sale alongside their existing offer in order to cater to this conscious customer.

¹ <https://www.vegansociety.com/news/news/1-3-brits-think-government-should-promote-vegan-diets-tackle-climate-crisis-0>

What's the solution?

The new 100% natural, organic, peat-free and veganic SuperSoil from The Real Soil Company has been created to help plants get off to the best possible start, without causing environmental damage.

Packed full of organic nutrients for optimal plant health, SuperSoil is the solution greener gardeners have been searching for.

Not only is SuperSoil a highly-effective growing media that helps plants to grow better and establish quicker, it boasts some pretty impressive green credentials of its own, helping to save water, reduce waste and avoid the need for harmful chemicals.

- 100% natural, organic ingredients
- completely peat free
- natural 'boosters' stimulate quicker plant establishment and provide better resilience against pests and disease
- provides improved water retention
- produced in the UK
- ethically-sourced, with complete traceability
- packaging is 100% recyclable

What role does topsoil play in protecting the planet?

As the uppermost layer of soil, (usually the top 5-10 inches), topsoil boasts the highest concentration of organic matter and microorganisms and, in nature, is where most of the Earth's biological soil activity occurs.

However, due to conventional farming practices, half of the topsoil on the planet has disappeared in the past 150 years². This dramatic change is reducing crop yields, contributing to nutrient pollution, clogged waterways, dead zones and erosion across the globe. Top soil helps to improve the structure and texture of soil, enabling it to retain moisture, nutrients, air and to drain excess water effectively. Without it, the earth's ability to filter water, and absorb carbon, would plummet significantly. Equally, any food grown without it, is likely to be far lower in vital nutrients.

The UNDP's People's Climate Vote³ recently revealed that there was strong support in West Europe and North America for the use of climate-friendly farming techniques to tackle the climate emergency, with 65% opting for this policy.

SuperSoil is a 100% natural topsoil, enhanced with a 100% natural and organic single-source plant derived amendment, which meets higher environmental, physical and nutritional standards than is currently specified in BS3882.

The Real Soil Company – part of Boughton Ltd – knows that soil biology plays a vital role in defining fundamental soil characteristics and health. The decomposition of organic matter by soil organisms has a major influence on soil fertility, plant growth, soil structure, and carbon storage.

² <https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/soil-erosion-and-degradation>

³ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/climate-and-disaster-resilience-/The-Peoples-Climate-Vote-Results.html>



That is why The Real Soil Company selects the finest natural topsoils as the main ingredient in SuperSoil. Each batch is analysed in detail by soil scientists and then precisely blended, in accordance with the company's stringent formula, to ensure optimum characteristics and performance.

Retailers can stock SuperSoil with complete confidence that they are offering customers a planet-friendly option that really works. With SuperSoil plants are more resilient to pests and disease, edible crops are nutritionally enhanced, healthier and provide a better yield.

Not only does SuperSoil boast a smaller carbon footprint, due to the fact it is ethically sourced and supplied by a UK-based facility but parent firm, Boughton offers guaranteed support and reliability of supply from its plant in Northamptonshire. This provides retailers with the reassurance that stocks run low, with the added benefit of greater flexibility, as volume amounts can also be tailored to their precise needs.

We talk about the gardeners of the future but this issue and demand for change is likely to hit home with your existing customer base as well. Although consumers aged under 18 demonstrate greater engagement with the issue and are more likely to describe climate change as an emergency, a recent report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)⁴ revealed that other age groups were not far behind. In fact, 78% of over 60s in the UK – which represent many core garden centre visitors - agreed that we are facing a climate emergency.

Retailers need to make sure they are engaging with their customers on this topic and offering them the right alternative.

Find out more

To find out more about The Real Soil Company please visit www.therealsoilcompany.co.uk or email info@therealsoilcompany.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

Boughton Ltd – An acknowledged specialist and market leading supplier of topsoil, growing media, specialist loam blends and landscaping products, with over 30 years of successful delivery to the industry U.K. wide.

The Real Soil Company excels across most landscaping and gardening projects, providing enhanced growing, quality plants/crops and attracting affluent eco conscious garden retail customers.

⁴ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/climate-and-disaster-resilience-/The-Peoples-Climate-Vote-Results.html>