

and Japanese importers become very concerned when a Canadian supplier sells a company's "dedicated" brand of peat moss to a competitor.

Agricultural and horticultural applications account for the balance (30 to 40 per cent) of peat moss usage in Japan. This includes the preparation of soil mixtures for the greenhouse production of small fruit (e.g. strawberries), flowers and vegetables; use in rice seedling nurseries; and for the production of soil/peat mixtures for commercial and homeowner use. In Japan, there is little or no demand from private homeowners for peat moss since the available area for lawns, gardens, shrubs and trees are small or non-existent compared with those of Canadian homes.

5 Domestic Production

There is very limited production of peat moss in Hokkaido, the most northern prefecture of Japan. However, production is insufficient to supply more than local requirements and none is shipped to other parts of Japan. No production information is available from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry

and Fisheries (MAFF). For all intents and purposes, Japan is completely dependent on imported peat moss.

6 Packaging

Japanese importers and end users prefer six-cubic-foot (0.16 m³) plastic bags of peat moss rather than other sizes although some demand is developing for smaller-sized, four-cubic-foot (0.11 m³) bags. Containerized shipment keeps the bags clean and dry and prevents product losses. The bags are printed with brand names and other information according to the customers' wishes. On arrival in Japan and before delivery to the end user, the importers label each bag to convey technical information, in Japanese, as required by the Japanese government. (See Table 3.)

In spite of the relatively high cost of plastic bags (about C\$0.75 each) there does not appear to be any alternative form of packaging available. The bags also serve as an advertising medium and help to create and preserve customers' loyalty.

Table 3

Sample Label under Soil Fertility Improvement Law

1. Nomenclature of Soil Improving Agent: Peat Moss from Canada
2. Category of Soil Improving Agent: Peat (Sphagnum from Canada)
3. Labelled by: Sansei Bussan Co., Ltd.
Mitsui Annex, 3-3-7, Nihonbashi-Muromachi
Chuo-ku, Tokyo
4. Net Quantity: 113 L
5. Materials: Peat Moss of Sphagnum family
6. Organic Content: 45%
7. Humic Acid Content in Organic Substances: 9%
8. Use (Major Effects): Improving soil's swelling and water holding properties.
9. Water Content: 55%
10. Dosage: 5 000 to 7 000 L per 10 acres