



European  
Commission

# The EU Ecolabel for growing media and soil improvers



July 2022

#EUGreenDeal #EUEcolabel

The EU Ecolabel is the official European Union label for environmental excellence.

The EU Ecolabel is awarded to sustainably designed products, encouraging innovation and contributing to the EU goal of **climate neutrality** by **2050**, and to the **clean** and **circular economy** with a **zero-pollution** ambition for a **toxic-free environment**.

Consumers are increasingly looking for sustainable options for gardening and horticulture. Through the EU Ecolabel, industry can offer true and reliable eco-friendly alternatives to conventional growing media and organic soil improvers (including mulch), empowering consumers to make informed choices and play an active role in the ecological transition.

Ambitious criteria, focusing on the main environmental impacts throughout the life cycle of the products, ensure that EU Ecolabel growing media and soil improvers are of good quality and among the best on the market in terms of environmental performance.

The EU Ecolabel criteria minimise the environmental impact of growing media and soil improvers on air, water, soil and biodiversity. They aim at protecting **nature**, including **pollinators** as well as promoting a **clean and circular economy** with a **zero-pollution** ambition.



Specifically, the EU Ecolabel guarantees:

- Use and promotion of organic materials
- Use and promotion of recycled/recovered materials
- Protection of pollinators, biodiversity and soil
- Restricted use of hazardous substances and contaminants
- Low energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Good performance





# Overview of the EU Ecolabel criteria for growing media and soil improvers

To be awarded the EU Ecolabel, growing media and soil improvers must comply with stringent mandatory criteria. See below how these criteria guarantee excellent environmental performance. For the full list of requirements, please refer to the official [EU Ecolabel criteria for growing media and soil improvers](#).

The EU Ecolabel guarantees	The EU Ecolabel requires
<b>Use and promotion of organic materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Soil improvers to be organic, so containing at least of 15% of organic matter;</li> <li>✓ Growing media to consist at least of 30% of organic components.</li> </ul>
<b>Use and promotion of recycled/recovered materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Organic components to strictly belong to a selected list of recycled/recovered raw materials;</li> <li>✓ Mineral components of growing media manufactured using at least 30% of recycled/recovered materials;</li> <li>✓ The collection and recycling of mineral growing media to represent at least 70% of the company's sales.</li> </ul>
<b>Protection of pollinators, biodiversity and soil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The exclusion of intentionally added peat;</li> <li>✓ Specific safeguarding requirements to be met by mineral extraction sites;</li> <li>✓ Restrictions on heavy metals, PAHs and macroscopic impurities.</li> </ul>
<b>Restricted use of hazardous substances and contaminants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stringent limits on substances and mixtures classified as hazardous, and substances of very high concern (SVHCs);</li> <li>✓ Strict thresholds for contaminants such as heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), macroscopic impurities, Salmonella spp., and Escherichia coli or Enterococcaceae.</li> </ul>
<b>Low energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mineral growing media to be produced with limited energy consumption and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.</li> </ul>
<b>Good performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stringent requirements on stability, plant response and macroscopic impurities to be validated by accredited laboratories.</li> </ul>



© Markus Spiske



Publications Office  
of the European Union

PDF

For more information and detail on how to apply,  
visit [www.ecolabel.eu](http://www.ecolabel.eu)

ISBN 978-92-76-54371-8

DOI: 10.2779/2104

KH-07-22-672-EN-N

The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.  
Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022  
© European Union, 2022  
For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders.