

# Meet the Peat

### Mike Harding

### What is Peat?

 Accumulated remains of plant materials formed under waterlogged conditions.

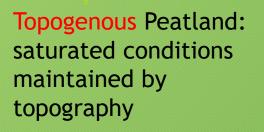
• Organisms responsible for the decay of plants are suppressed.

### How fast can it grow?

• Slowly!!

• 21-60cm per 1000 years (Walker 1970)

# Meet the Family





- Basin Mires
- Hover
- Floodplain Mire

Soligenous: saturated because of lateral groundwater movement **Ombrogenous:** 

rain

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saturated by constant

**Peatlands** 

- Valley Mire
- Spring Mire
- Track ways/ladder fens

## What is Peat Made Of?

# 5 Main Components:

- Sphagnum (bog moss) Bog peat
- Hypnoid moss (all the other moss) Fen Peat
- Sedges and grasses Fen peat
- Woody Plants Brushwood Peat
- Humified peat amorphous, decomposed, granular.

Tells us about origins and the environment they developed in.

## What about condition

Generally determined by degree of decomposition (humification) - Von Post Scale
 H1 Plant structure unaltered, Undecomposed Fibrous Peat
 H2 Fibrous Peat

H3 Plant structure distinct, most remains easily identifiable Fibrous Peat

H4 Plant structure distinct, most remains identifiable Semi-fibrous Peat

H5 Semi-fibrous Peat

H6 Plant structure indistinct, most remains unidentifiable. Well decomposed. Semifibrous Peat

H7 Plant structure indistinct but recognisable. Strongly decomposed. Humified Peat
H8 Plant structure very indistinct, only roots and wood recognisable. Humified Peat
H9 Humified Peat

H10 Plant structure completely unrecognisable. Completely Amorphous Humified Peat

## Peat Chemistry

Very complex subject.

- Ombrotrophic (rain-fed peat) base poor, acid.
- Other peats reflect landscape history, geology and hydrology because they are sustained by catchment waters.