



EPT reusable trays visible in stores on a large scale for the first time

With the start of the spring season, not only do millions of plants end up in retail outlets, but usually also millions of single-use plastic trays.

With the introduction of the first two EPT models in summer 2024, the picture is changing this year: more and more retailers are starting with the environmentally friendly alternative, the new reusable trays from EPT.

'The introduction of reusable plant trays is a significant step for the entire garden and DIY sector. For the first time, there is a standardised, sustainable solution that massively reduces plastic waste and is also practical for all retailers and customers. EPT trays have got off to a successful start at BAUHAUS, and we will now continue to drive the introduction of further trays forward on a large scale thus expanding our commitment to sustainability,' says Helmut Rödiger, Head of Purchasing Garden and Plants at BAHAG AG.

EPT is also used already in Globus Baumarkt stores. Timo Huwer, CEO of Globus Baumarkt: 'Globus Baumarkt started as a member of Euro Plant Tray eG in 2022 and has actively helped to shape the reusable system. We are delighted with the result: robust reusable plant trays, simplified handling and a sustainable contribution to reducing single-use plastic waste. We are using EPT trays in all of our 90 stores since February 2025.'

Hornbach Baumarkt AG had started the introduction in summer 2024 and is already using EPT trays internationally this spring: 'As a co-founder of EPT, we are proud to be a pioneer in the international introduction of EPT reusable trays. Employees and customers appreciate our commitment to reducing single-use plastic waste and at the POS, the standardised trays also put the goods in the customer's focus,' says Jutta Lehmann, Group Purchasing Manager Garden at Hornbach BAUMARKT AG.

Also the Austrian Bellaflora garden centres are already using EPT's new reusable system.

In addition to environmental aspects, EPT trays are also economically attractive: the Euro Plant Tray rental models with instalments reduce rental cost of a tray to around half the price of a disposable tray from just 4 cycles per year, with no upfront investment required. 'It was important to us that we also support the industry financially in the transition and thus additionally promote sustainable action,' says Dirk Bansemmer, Managing Director of EPT GmbH. 'We offer different rental periods with payment by instalments, e.g. with a 3-year contract the rental costs for 4 cycles are just €0.17 per EPT 400 rotation - we know from the market that a disposable tray costs an average of €0.35. And that doesn't even include the cost of the plastic tax, which already has to be paid by distributors in many countries.'

Dirk Bansemmer continues: 'Every average CC transports around 4 kg of single-use. Hardly anyone thinks about that! In some cases, the packaging is seen as a means of transport for the consumer, but the tray ultimately ends up in the rubbish. Every company should calculate for itself how much plastic waste it is responsible for - and think about whether this can still be justifiable behaviour in this day and age!'

It is impressive what the members of EPT have achieved in the last 2.5 years: We have developed 4 tray models and brought them to market maturity, after EPT 775 and EPT 777 in 400 format, 2 models in 200 format will soon go into production. We have developed rental contracts and respective service packages. In order to protect the liquidity of users, EPT trays are offered on a rental basis with payment by instalments, i.e. EPT pre-finances the production. We have also mastered this challenge. More than 1,500 private individuals have already participated in EPT CrowdInvest with our partners GLS Crowd, WiWin and Inyova, a clear sign of how important sustainability is to consumers and how much confidence they have in future-proof developments. Nevertheless, we are still noticing a certain reluctance among many market participants. Instead of learning how to use reusable trays in their own organisations now and actively avoiding plastic waste already, they are waiting that the PPWR legislation forces them to do so.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) adopted by the EU Parliament in December 2024 prohibits the use of single-use plastic packaging for national B2B transports and transports within a company from 1 January 2030. In practice, this means that upstream and downstream processes in the green sector will be almost 100% reusable. EPT members actively decided to reduce plastic waste even before this legal development.

The economic and environmental benefits of EPT trays are clear. Dirk Bansemer calls on the industry to take action: 'In just over 1,000 working days, the PPWR will be mandatory for everyone and the end of the transition period will be reached. We can only emphasise the need to act now! Calculate your need for EPT trays, book your production slot - even if you cannot start the changeover immediately. This is the only way to ensure that you can comply with the new rules in time. My team and I will be happy to support you. Don't wait any longer, because avoiding waste is something that concerns us all, not just tomorrow, but now, every single day!'