

Biochar's rapid growth, packaging laws, and a new fertilizer

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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Biochar's Growth
Packaging Laws to Watch
New Fertilizer
Consumer Insights
Report from the MT Outpost

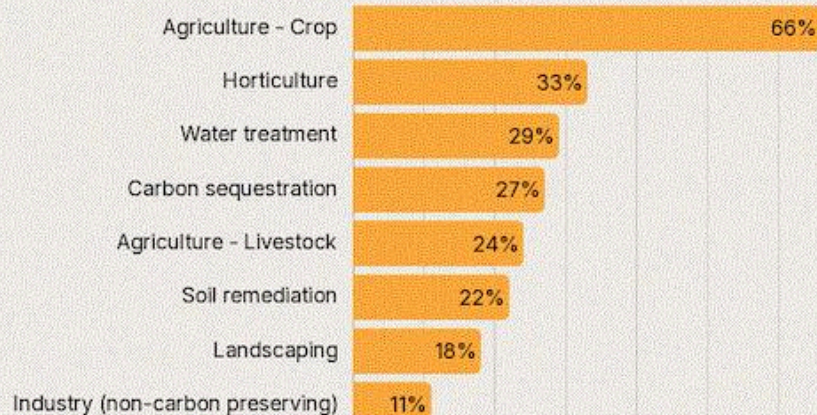


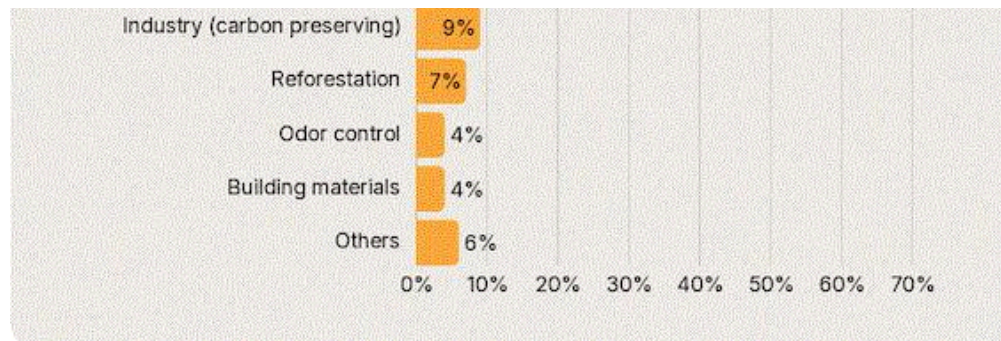
Biochar Keeps Growing

The 2025 United States Biochar Market Report is out, and the American Biochar Institute (ABI) says that they're seeing a rapid increase in biochar use across water filtration, agriculture and other markets.

The estimated economic value of the U.S. biochar industry has increased from \$53.6 million in 2023 to about \$157 million in 2025, with agriculture being the largest market. Ag crop use and horticulture are the top two end-use markets for biochar, but there's also a move to get it into smaller higher-value segments, including fertilizers, water filtration, compost, water remediation and even concrete. Biochar-enhanced fertilizer was the number-one priority market for industry growth in the report.

Common Biochar End Uses

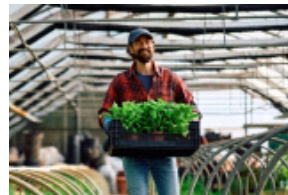




One of the more fascinating aspects of biochar is the wide breadth it covers. Those who make biochar equipment have a truly diverse range of customers, from logging companies to composters, ag producers, municipalities, nonprofits and more. The range of feedstock sources for biochar is equally diverse, though woody biomass remains the dominant feedstock.

The market report is based on a survey, so the data we're seeing here is self-reported. Still, it's the first time the U.S. market has had a benchmark.

You can view the report [HERE](#).



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Packaging Laws to Watch

Seven U.S. States now have "extended producer responsibility" (EPR) laws on the books, which shift the cost of recycling packaging from cities and citizens to the companies who produced it. Maine, Oregon, Colorado, California, Maryland, Minnesota and Washington all have their own version of what this looks like as they move towards getting companies into compliance.

Oregon is probably the furthest along, with their EPR program launching last year, requiring companies to register, report and pay fees. And they just released their first list of non-compliant companies. Mind you, these are companies that did register with the program but that aren't compliant. I see an apple orchard and a few produce companies, as well as a hort equipment supplier making that naughty list, alongside some giants like FedEx and Hobby Lobby. Oregon's law in particular offers quite a few [exemptions](#), including wholesale nursery stock sales, single-location retail establishments and some farm-use situations. You also are exempt if you can qualify as a small producer.

EPR laws are a bit of a wakeup call on the cost of recycling. But they're also being challenged in court. In fact, The National Association of Wholesaler Distributors has taken Oregon to court, and their trial started this week. It's a space to pay attention to, whether your state is still defining its law (for instance, Washington hasn't fully defined and implemented its program yet) or as legislation moves forward. Several more states are doing exploratory groundwork, with both New York and New Jersey having drafted bills that have not yet fully passed.

There's a good article on the top 10 states to keep an eye on [HERE](#).



BioWorks' New Fertilizer

BioWorks just introduced a new mixed-mineral fertilizer designed to complement your IPM programs during root initiation and early vegetative development. Call GreenSpring, it is said to delivers targeted nutrition that can promote root development and improve tolerance to abiotic stress conditions.

This 1-0-0 liquid fertilizer contains nitrogen, sulfur, molybdenum and zinc. BioWorks says it can be used in field, greenhouse, high tunnel and nursery production systems across ornamental, vegetable and fruit crops.

For best early-season performance, they say to apply at planting or during early vegetative growth stages, and to make four to eight applications at seven-day intervals. Efficacy trials showed increased yield in corn and wine grapes.

In the press release, BioWorks General Manager Chris Rose said GreenSpring was developed to help growers establish healthier crops from the very beginning of the season.



“By improving nutrient availability during critical early growth stages, GreenSpring gives growers an important tool to maximize plant performance and support season-long success.”

GreenSpring is available in most of the U.S.; registration is pending in California, Illinois, Vermont and Washington.

Learn more [HERE](#).



Sustainability Consumer Insights

The Natural Marketing Institute's [State of Sustainability in America Report](#), in partnership with Research America, is always packed with interesting findings—and they now have 24 years' worth of data! The 2026 report comes with a few shifts in consumer awareness and urgency. While NMI gatekeeps the specific numbers behind a big paywall, here's the gist of where things are headed, according to their survey:

- Heightened Environmental Awareness: 41% of U.S. adults believe the planet is at or past a tipping point.

- **Evolving Consumer Values:** Shifts toward eco-centric thinking. Consumers are recognizing the importance of biodiversity, resource conservation and environmental protection beyond human benefit alone.
- **Growing Demand for Accountability:** Consumers want to understand which sustainability initiatives companies support, including renewable energy use, circular economy adoption and toxin reduction efforts.
- **Behavioral Engagement:** Participation in recycling, reduced waste habits and environmentally conscious living continues to hold strong, with many willing to make lifestyle changes for environmental improvement.

That aligns with PwC's **Voice of the Consumer** research, which found that 80% of consumers say they're willing to pay more for sustainably produced or sourced goods. In fact, they're willing to pay 9.7% more. And a **2025 GlobeScan report** found that 49% of Americans said they purchased an environmentally friendly product in the previous month, up from 43% less than a year earlier. Meanwhile 36% wanted to buy a sustainable product but didn't, citing price, lack of information or availability as the primary barriers.

All of this points to a more discerning consumer. They may not be falling for greenwashing claims as often. They're taking more into account, and some are starting to look at the bigger picture, sometimes the ecological big picture, sometimes household ethics and finances big picture.



Report from the MT Outpost



We're in the thick of our first summer running a vacation rental. There are a lot of theories and approaches in the hospitality world, but I think what I appreciate most is the line of thought that this isn't about customer service. I mean, I aim to deliver all the efficient and "nice" customer service expectations, of course. But in my heart, I'm attending to details that create memorable experiences and emotional connections. That's why people will come back.

There's a book called *Unreasonable Hospitality* and the author, Will Guidara, has said, "I think hospitality is when you give someone a sense of connection to you. It's about making people feel seen and giving them a sense of belonging. It's about making them feel welcome." And he's not just talking about what you'd think of as just the restaurant/hotel industry. Nearly every business has the opportunity to make a customer feel seen.

I'm embracing that question of "how do you make a customer feel," and I confess, it puts the "why" in this little business venture. I just spent the last two weeks creating stickers and print materials that feel like a traveler's collection box. Our cabin is full of little things that prompt visitors to actually think about where they are and the memories they are creating. I've been giving guests the option of meeting the "host dogs," which always leads to a delightful visit (and bonus, the puppy is getting socialized). And no two gift bags are the same; I tailor each one to each guest. Every visit is a special occasion.

Our rental cabin is in the Yellowstone National Park region, often putting this trip in the bucket list category as opposed to "we return every year." But I think we're changing minds here, giving them a feeling that they need this little cabin repeatedly.

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial 'J'.

Jennifer Duffield White

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