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Toyota to mine eco-friendly China peat to cool roofs



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Monday July 15, 2:47 AM EDT

TOKYO, July 15 (Reuters) - Japan's top automaker, Toyota Motor Corp (7203), said on Monday its latest eco-friendly venture was to cut peat in China for use in rooftop greening to help to cool overheated Japanese cities.

The auto giant, which has a number of such projects, said it had set up a new company that will begin cutting peat in Yuexi county in Sichuan province in western China from January.

The company, Sichuan Toyota Niton Development in the provincial capital of Chengdu, aims to earn a profit in its second year of operation with estimated sales of 360 million yen (\$3.08 million).

Toyota said the nutrient and water retention capability of peat was far better than ordinary soil.

That made it ideal for use in rooftop greening projects in Tokyo and many other Japanese cities, which suffer from the so-called heat-island effect where high temperatures are given off from buildings, asphalt and cars.



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The peat would also be exported to the United States and to arid regions such as the Middle East, to improve soil quality, the automaker said.

Toyota's other environmentally friendly businesses include a flowering-plant unit in Japan and a tree-planting subsidiary in Australia. In

Indonesia it grows sweet potatoes to make biodegradable plastics for auto parts.

Not all of Toyota's smaller non car-related ventures are a success. The automaker pulled the chain on its portable toilet business last month due to poor sales. ([\\$1=116](#))

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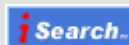
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