

Press release

Reedest OÜ

AI-powered production: Estonian company to produce one million natural reed drinking straws daily

All drinking straws produced by the Estonian company, named Reedest, are made out of local reed stalks, which make the straws fully biodegradable. The company has already opened wholesale.

The automatic production line to make reed drinking straws is a tailor-made solution that took four years for engineers to develop. The complexity comes from the fact that all reed plants are different in terms of diameter, shape and colour. To overcome this, Reedest team developed an innovative and AI-powered industrial automation system that uses sensors and machine learning algorithms to take the variability of reed into account.

With the help of this production line, on average, 400 drinking straws can be made from one plant. "With this volume, we can produce up to one million drinking straws in a day. Thus we can offer large quantities of natural drinking straws at low prices," said the Chief Executive Officer of Reedest, Grete Riim. She noted that the company plans to reach that kind of production volume this spring or summer, yet the wholesale is already open and the company fulfills customers' orders.

On the Reedest production line, reeds are processed mechanically and no additives are used while producing straws. Therefore, all drinking straws are 100% natural and can be thrown into a biodegradable food waste container after use. Straw decomposes into compost in less than a year.

In order to fulfill the company's goal – the production of one million disposable straws per day – the company needs to cut reeds on an area of about 200 hectares per year. The total area of reeds in Estonia is more than 27 000 hectares. Reed is also an annual plant, which means it grows back every year.

Advantages of reed straw over others

"After The European Union banned the use of plastic straws in 2021, the main alternative for plastic straw is one made out of paper, but this is not user-friendly as it quickly soaks in beverages," said Riim, the CEO of Reedest. She added that there are also metallic reusable straws on the market, but they are often too expensive for hotels, restaurants and caterers

and may change the taste of beverages. "With metallic straws, it can get difficult to maintain reusable straws' hygiene," explained Riim.

In addition, there are sugarcane straws on the market. However, in order to obtain a processable mass from natural sugarcane, which can be processed into straw during extrusion, it is necessary to chemically process it. Therefore the production process may still involve significant energy use and carbon emissions. They also fall short when used with hot drinks like coffee or tea. On the contrary, Reedest straws don't change the taste, melt in drink nor harm our nature.

The founders of Reedest have experience in the production of natural drinking straws since 2015, when the first known reed drinking straws were brought to the market, named Pillirookõrs.

Have a closer look into Reedest's production process:

Video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QknhygLk6iY>

Link, to download the video: <https://station.vaas.ee/sharing/eBxOXzd2k>

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