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## OAT SHOES: shoes that bloom!

### OAT Shoes

OAT are a company founded and based in the Netherlands in 2009 with a passion for products that use natural, biodegradable materials like flax, cork, hemp and ecological cotton to produce the world's first biodegradable sneakers that grow flowers when you plant them. OAT Shoes launched in 2011 founded by designer Christiaan Maats.

Once planted in warm moist soils the shoes will break down within about 6 months. OAT shoes estimates that they are saving 99% of water and 60% of CO<sub>2</sub> compared to regular cotton canvas shoes. They also aim to make a positive impact on the world by sourcing all of their materials ethically.

OAT's mission is to make things bloom. Oat Shoes wants to place people back into the natural cycle of life by making them participate in it, creating products that bloom into something new once they're worn down. They believe is everything should and anything can be made to bloom with the right idea, the right material, organization and design. The mission is to make those products, services and ideas based on three core values: unite, create and inspire.

They have also developed the first biodegradable leather shoes, bags that grow sunflowers and even baby shoes with seeds to grow your baby's Tree of Life.

### The importance of the story with the Product

Christian's concept spawned from his theory that an important element of their business story is to in-bed a proposal for customers to think and act differently. This recognition of how the story behind the design and manufacture of the product helps shape behaviour and thinking shows how simple concepts can be innovative and provoke change.

In nature things are used and then thrown away, they decompose and stuff becomes available as a source for new life. This is contrary to hard non-biodegradable products that are designed for a function, used and throw away, but the product does not break down or adds toxins to the environment.

OAT products are seen as a reconciliation between the industrial age and the natural world in a way of becoming more sustainable both in the way we think and behave.

"A revolution in product design. And the flowers will always remind you of the time you wore these shoes. Another benefit is that consumers get to feel good about discarding of them rather than feeling guilty" – Christiaan Maats - Founder

### What Makes OAT Shoes green/circular?

This is a good example of a closed loop system in place that is working successfully in a competitive market and which can also be linked to how nature uses natural processes to ensure no waste i.e. microbial/bacteria breakdown of materials.

With each OAT product, they are changing the way the industry works and, hopefully, the way people experience their environment. They work to make products better, production processes cleaner and the threshold for sustainable choices lower. With every OAT product you buy, you support their mission to make your world bloom into a better, healthier future.

### LFN Principles Supported by OAT Shoes

Waste = food – from production to the end of the product life cycle OAT products inevitably break down and become food for decomposers, pumping back nutrients and energy into natural ecosystems.

Multiple benefits – aside from the obvious benefit to the environment OAT products also make the disposal process easier. Furthermore the flowers that bloom provide food for pollinators helping seed dispersal, enhancing the biodiversity of the local area.

### Achievements

Fledgling Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - at the prestigious Green Fashion Awards

*"Everything we do, everything we use and create has an impact, however big or small. And every day we can choose what that impact is going to be."*

