

techtextil

Functional natural materials in high demand: real all-rounders for the industry in focus at Techtextil 2026

Frankfurt am Main, 15 August 2024. Natural yet high-performing fibres are game changers for many branches. Nature and performance come together in new, innovative solutions – a real milestone towards sustainability. At Techtextil 2024, international exhibitors showed future-proof developments for numerous industries in the ‘Nature Performance’ area. For Techtextil 2026, functional natural materials will become even more of a focus.

Functional and natural at the same time – innovative natural fibres manage the link between performance and sustainability and are developing into real all-rounders. They are in high demand for application in numerous industries worldwide. The market for natural fibres alone is expected to grow to around USD 103 million in 2031¹. As demand for natural materials increases, innovations are also being developed to improve their performance. New materials, finishing and processing methods increase the performance of sustainable textiles – whether natural, bio-based, degradable or man-made. This was also evident at Techtextil in April, which dedicated a separate ‘Nature Performance’ area to the future topic.

"The industry is ready to provide a range of functional textiles on a natural basis. Whether in the automotive or construction industry, the demand for natural materials is increasing rapidly. We are pleased to see that forward-looking solutions are being presented and welcomed by the branches. In April, more than 15 per cent of exhibitors were already showing natural fibres and materials. Due to the high demand and ongoing developments, we expect an even larger range of natural performance materials at the next Techtextil", says Sabine Scharrer, Director Brand Management Technical Textiles & Textile Processing at Messe Frankfurt.

The exhibitors presented a whole range of fibre and material exhibits with functional properties to the trade visitors, ranging from natural insulating materials to circular polyester fibres.

Among them was the Canadian start-up Vegeto, which presented degradable thermal insulation based on milkweed, biopolymer fibres made from corn starch and kapok, a natural fibre from the silk tree. A jacket with a non-woven inner lining based on the new milkweed insulation apparently attracted a lot of attention at the Vegeto stand in the Nature Performance area. "People came to our stand and were really amazed that a plant-based insulating material of this quality even exists," reports Vegeto General Manager Ghyslain Bouchard.

¹ [Global market for natural fibres - industry trends and forecast to 2031, Data Bridge Market Research \(2024\)](#)

Anatolian Colors from Turkey showcased innovative natural dyes that can compete with chemical dyes in terms of quality and durability. “The Nature Performance Area was an excellent platform for us, which fits perfectly with our vision of environmentally friendly and sustainable textile production,” says Sophia Merve Ince, founder of Anatolian Colors. Participation in Techtextil has noticeably increased awareness of the new plant dyes and helped to reach a larger international audience. Talks were held on site with representatives from various industries – from fashion to automotive. “It was particularly pleasing that a leading fashion brand showed interest in a pilot project with our products for its own collection,” reports the CEO. Due to its great success, the company is already planning to take part in Techtextil 2026.

The Swiss start-up OceanSafe presented a polyester material that, according to the company, is just as durable, functional and scalable as conventional polyester. The highlight: it is also said to be completely biodegradable. The circular polyester was very well received by trade visitors: “The feedback was amazing,” says CMO Matthias Fuchs, summarising the company's first Techtextil appearance. “We had significantly more visitors than expected.” According to Fuchs, the variety of contacts ranged from automotive, medical and clothing to workwear, construction and public procurement. Overall, the quality of the visitors was “excellent”.

The increasing usage of natural fibres in the textile industry was also the central theme of the ‘Discover Natural Fibres Initiative’ (DNFI) at Techtextil. The international alliance of over 40 associations, organisations, natural fibre manufacturers and research institutes aims to raise awareness of the importance of natural fibres and promote their application. Looking back, Sandra Bohne, Managing Director of DNFI member ‘Fibril Material Alliance’, is very satisfied with the DNFI participation in the Nature Performance area. “Many companies that have not yet used natural fibres before visited our booth to find out about alternatives to man-made fibres,” says Bohne. Overall, it was a very successful event at which the DNFI representatives received many questions about potential applications for natural fibres from a wide range of industries, including fashion, home textiles, construction, automotive and composites.

The innovative companies demonstrate this: Nature and performance are a sustainable match. At Techtextil 2026, the focus will be even more on natural fibres, yarns and materials.



Photo: Messe Frankfurt / Jean-Luc Valentin

Techtextil 2026 will be held from 21 to 24 April 2026.

Press information and photographic material:

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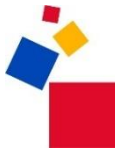
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