

## British Sugar TOPSOIL expands Cranfield soil health study

A Cranfield University study into the amount of soil microbiology in TOPSOIL products has been expanded to give customers further useful information on soil health through the measurement of Microbial Biomass. The purpose of this latest work was to compare freshly despatched Landscape20 and HortLoam, with typical organic matter content of 4-6% and 6-8% respectively, with product that has been in situ for a number of years and an historic allotment soil.

The study, which was again overseen by Senior Research Fellow of Soil Biology at Cranfield University Dr Mark Pawlett, analysed three samples from each of the following four treatments:

- *Landscape20* BS3882:2015-compliant topsoil – sampled at the point of despatch.
- *HortLoam* planting topsoil (a blend of BS3882:2015-compliant topsoil with greenwaste compost) – sampled at the point of despatch.
- Allotment soil - in situ for 20 years, receiving an annual application of compost and having cover crops dug into it.
- *HortLoam* – in situ since April 2019, planted with a range of perennial shrubs and mulched at the time of planting.

Analysis shows that all soils are significantly different from each other. Unsurprisingly, the addition of greenwaste compost increases the microbial biomass, and this effect is further enhanced by annual applications of green manures and composts, as seen in the allotment soil. Over time the microbial biomass in a soil increases as the decaying organic matter feeds the microorganisms.

Commenting on the latest study, National TOPSOIL Manager Andy Spetch said:

*“This study is really helping us to better understand our products and why they perform so well. It further reinforces the link between Microbial Biomass levels and the addition of compost and green manures to soil.”*

The study data and report can be freely accessed on the TOPSOIL website at [www.bstopsoil.co.uk](http://www.bstopsoil.co.uk)

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Further information: Andy Spetch - 01733 422084 / 07850 3369787  
[andy.spetch@britishsugar.com](mailto:andy.spetch@britishsugar.com)

***Note to editors:***

**TOPSOIL**

British Sugar TOPSOIL is the largest suppliers of quality TOPSOIL in the UK. Our products, SubSoil, Landscape20, HortLoam and Sports&Turf, are successfully used by the construction, landscaping and amenity industries. For further information on British Sugar TOPSOIL go to [www.bstopsoil.co.uk](http://www.bstopsoil.co.uk)

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Over 3,000 growers supply us with around 8 million tonnes of sugar beet each year, which we process into up to 1.4 million tonnes of sugar.

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