

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

E N D S

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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

British Sugar is the leading supplier of sugar to the British and Irish food and beverage markets. We operate four advanced manufacturing plants across East Anglia and the East Midlands employing around 1,400 permanent and contract staff directly at our facilities and supporting up to 9,500 UK jobs in the wider economy.

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.

Sugar production is at the heart of our operations but using our highly integrated approach to manufacturing, we aim to transform all of our raw materials into sustainable products. We produce 500,000 tonnes of animal feed from sugar beet pulp. We recycle stones for building, lime for soil conditioning and soil for landscaping. Using our Combined Heat & Power plants, we export enough electricity for over 120,000 homes; we were also the first company to manufacture Bioethanol in the UK.

Over the past five years, we have invested over £250 million to improve efficiency and competitiveness; in addition, we invest over £2m every year in research, development and education.

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