

TOP 10 TIPS FOR SOURCING AND MANAGING TOPSOIL



The 'Focus on Soil' feature in the October 2018 issue of FutureArc looked at the provenance of British Sugar TOPSOIL's products, the manufacturing process, and the comprehensive suite of tests carried out before leaving one of the company's East Anglia production facilities. Here, Andy Spetch, national topsoil manager for British Sugar, offers landscape architects his top 10 tips for sourcing topsoil and for managing in-situ and imported topsoils on site.

1 Assess the quality and suitability of the project's site soils, preferably before stripping the topsoil, by conducting a soil resource survey. This is separate from a normal ground investigation and should be carried out by experienced soil scientists.

2 If imported soils are required, use only BS 3882:2015 compliant topsoil and BS 8601:2013 compliant subsoil from reputable suppliers who must provide a valid declaration of analysis (including contamination analysis).



3 Refer to both the above standards for advice on correct soil sampling, handling, storage, soil preparation and planting depths as each aspect will impact on the success of the project.

4 When arranging delivery of bulk loads, ensure the supplier asks the right questions about site access, for example entry width and height, overhead services (important when articulated vehicles or flatbed lorries with hi-abs for off-loading

one tonne IBC bags are used), weight limits and delivery times. Make sure your suppliers use only experienced and approved hauliers who operate safely and whose vehicles present no risk of contamination to your topsoil from previous materials carried.

5 Create a dry, clean, segregated holding area for storing topsoil (imported and in situ) and protect the stock.



6 Minimise the amount of human and mechanical traffic over the area to be landscaped to avoid compaction.



7 Set levels for topsoil application – minimum depth 150mm, maximum depth 300mm.

8 Avoid handling topsoil in wet conditions.

9 Slightly consolidate the new topsoil by lightly pressing with the back of an excavator bucket; avoid compacting newly laid topsoil.

10 Work off a board when planting or turfing to minimise compaction.



USEFUL INFORMATION

Sales team support

Good sales team support is essential. British Sugar TOPSOIL's sales team receives ongoing technical training so that they can provide informed advice to landscape architects and contractors. In addition, the website at www.bsttopsoil.co.uk contains everything you need to know about quality topsoil and includes technical guides and case studies to download. To see the manufacturing process in action, click on the online video on the home page, and calculate product quantities using the online calculator

Useful guidance documents

- Defra Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites, 2009 – please note that this has not been updated since 2009 so should be used as a reference only and may not reflect current legislation or controls.
- BS 3882:2015 specification for topsoil
- BS 8601:2013 specification for subsoil and requirements for use

The essential guide to topsoil

Produced by British Sugar TOPSOIL, in conjunction with Pro Landscaper Business Awards winner Tim O'Hare Associates (www.toha.co.uk), this guide contains useful information for landscape architects, landscapers, groundworks contractors and housing developers who need to have a better understanding of the important factors to consider when buying and using topsoil. This comprehensive booklet covers areas such as: what makes a good topsoil; the British Standard (BS 3882:2015); development of green and brownfield sites; topsoil terminology, topsoil analysis, plus tips on buying topsoil. Free download from www.bsttopsoil.co.uk

With thanks to Tim O'Hare for his onsite soil management input.

BRITISH SUGAR TOPSOIL

As part of AB Sugar, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Associated British Foods plc, British Sugar TOPSOIL was set up 20 years ago to improve the sustainability of the sugar refining process. It is the UK's largest supplier of quality topsoil products to the landscape and amenity industries.

W: www.bsttopsoil.co.uk