

Topsoiling

General

Topsoiling is obtaining soil material favorable for plant growth and spreading it over an area where vegetation is to be established. The soil may be salvaged from the area during the construction progress and stockpiled or obtained from an alternate site. Addition of topsoil to an area after construction is completed will improve the

chances of establishing a dense, vigorous vegetative cover. On some areas, the addition of soil material is a requirement to obtain vigorous plant growth. Soil to be used for this purpose should have chemical tests made to determine its desirability for use.



Topsoil can be stockpiled for future use.



Spreading topsoil after completion of grading.

Topsoiling

Definition: Obtaining soil material favorable to plant growth from other places and spreading it over an area where vegetation is to be established.

Purpose: To improve the soil medium for plant growth on areas that are disturbed by construction or otherwise having inadequate vegetative cover.

Where Applicable: Adding topsoil to establish finished grades may be needed to shorten the time and reduce the care needed to establish protective cover on disturbed soil material.

1. This practice applies to areas where texture and structure of soil material exposed will not support establishment and maintenance of protective vegetative cover. Four to six inches of soil material should be spread over the area.

2. It applies on areas where rooting zone is too shallow to support vegetation. Amount of soil material required depends on the site.
3. On areas found to be toxic (excess pyritic material on surface), the amount of soil material added depends on the site.

Specifications

1. Topsoil (soil material favorable to plant growth) shall consist of friable surface soil reasonably free of grass, roots, weeds, sticks, stones, or other foreign material.
2. Topsoil material from the construction site should be stockpiled soon after the area has been cleared on a place (designated by the engineer) where it will not interfere with construction progress. Topsoil piles should be seeded to reduce erosion during the storage period.

3. Spreading topsoil material:

- a. **Bonding:** After the areas to be topsoiled have been brought to grade, and immediately prior to dumping and spreading the topsoil, the subgrade shall be loosened by discing or scarifying to a depth of at least 2 inches to insure bonding of the topsoil and subsoil.
- b. Spreading should be attempted when soil conditions are favorable for tillage (soil should not be wet or frozen).
- c. On highly acid areas and areas deficient in plant nutrients (especially soil phosphorus), lime and fertilizer should be added prior to spreading soil material.
- d. Spread topsoil uniformly over the designated area. The amount of smoothing after spreading depends on slope (the tendency on steep areas where topsoil is being spread is to smooth it too much with construction equipment).
- e. Seed as soon as possible after the topsoil has been spread.
- f. Lime and fertilizer should be applied as required and mixed by slightly scarifying the surface 2 inches deep.
- g. Special attention should be given to maintaining established grades in waterway, outlets, diversions, areas around buildings, etc., during spreading of topsoil.