

British and European Standards, Independent Specifications and Certifiers of Landscape Materials

There is currently no British or European Standard that covers product specifications for mulches, soil ameliorants or tree and shrub planting composts.

- Each product manufacturer has produced their own product specification, although some of these are quite vague.
- In 1988 NBS Services, produced a document called "National Building Specification:Section Q31", which sets out very basic text for landscape specification. This publication was substantially updated in 1997.
- The Department of Transport, Environment & Regions issued a publication entitled "Product Guide for Compost Specifiers" in November 1997. It sets out their typical specification for landscape materials made from botanical green residue, as follows :-

Specification for Soil Improvers, Mulches and Topsoils		
Soil Improvers and Planting Composts	Mulches	Manufactured Topsoil
Particle size 0 - 15 mm	Particle size 5 - 100 mm	Clay content (< 0.002mm) < 30 % Sand content (0.06 - 2 mm) 20 - 70 %
pH 4.5 - 7.5	pH 4.5 - 7.5 (to be stated)	pH 5.0 - 8.0 (5.0 - 6.0 for acid loving plants)
Organic matter content > 60 %		Organic matter content 10 - 30 %
Dust & fines content < 15 %	Dust & fines content < 5 %	Stone content (> 40 mm) < 40 %
Pest, weed and pathogen free	Pest, weed and pathogen free	Pest, weed and pathogen free
Glass, plastic and other contaminants free	Glass, plastic and other contaminants free	Glass, plastic and other contaminants free
Electrical conductivity 600 micro-siemens/cm or less		Electrical conductivity 600 micro-siemens/cm or less
Total nitrogen > 1%	Good porosity to water and air	Moisture content 20 - 35 %
Carbon: Nitrogen 20:1 to 90:130	Resistant to wind and rain erosion	
Cation exchange capacity 15 - 30 milliequivalents/100 ml	Resistant to fire	

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The following British Standards are relevant to landscaping:-

- BS 1192:Part 3:1987 Construction drawing practice. Recommendations for symbols and other graphic conventions
- BS 1192:Part4:1984 Construction drawing practice. Recommendations for landscape drawings
- BS 3998:1989 Recommendations for tree work
- BS 4156:1990 Recommendations for peat for horticultural and landscape use
- BS 4428:1989 Code of practice for general landscape operations [excluding hard surfaces]
- BS 5837:1991 Guide for trees in relation to construction
- BS 6031:1981 Code of practice for earthworks
- BS 6100:Part 1:Section 1.3:Subsection 1.3.0:1991 Glossary of building and civil engineering terms. General and miscellaneous. Parts of construction works. External works
- BS 7370:Part 1:1991 Grounds maintenance. Recommendations for establishing and managing grounds maintenance organizations and for design considerations related to maintenance
- BS 7370:Part 3:1991 Grounds maintenance. Recommendations for maintenance of amenity and functional turf [other than sports turf]
- BS 7370:Part 4:1993 Grounds maintenance. Recommendations for maintenance of soft landscape [other than amenity turf]
- 91/17575 DC ISO/DIS 11091. Construction drawings. Landscape drawing practice
- 95/104104 DC Grounds maintenance. Part 5. Recommendations for maintenance of water areas [intended to form a new Part of BS 7370]

A new European C.E.N. Standard, entitled "Soil Improvers and Growing Media", is currently being prepared for publication by a Technical Committee CEN/TC223.

There are four working groups, dealing with:-

- labelling, specification and vocabulary
- safety
- sampling
- method of analysis



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