

MISC-2: Amended Soils

Soil amendments alter the soil characteristics to allow it to absorb, infiltrate, and retain more water to help reduce runoff volume and velocity, filter pollutants, increase the quality and quantity of vegetation, and reduce erosion potential more effectively than soils without soil amendments. Mulch is an amendment that is added on the top of the soil, rather than mixed into the soil, which reduces evaporation and adds to the aesthetics of a site. Compost and fertilizers are common soil amendments that must be completely mixed into the soil to function properly.



Soil amended area at U.S. EPA Ariel Rios building.

Source:

http://www.epa.gov/oaintrnt/stormwater/hq_projects.htm

General Criteria

- Compost, soil conditioners, and fertilizers should be rototilled into the native soil to a minimum depth of 6" (12 inches preferred). Mulch at grade should be spread over all planting areas to a depth of 3".
- Sand can be used as an amendment to improve the drainage rates of amended soils. Sand should be free of stones, stumps, roots or other similar objects larger than 5 mm
- Incorporating compost and other organics into the root zone results in enhanced biological activity, attenuation of environmental contaminants, increased moisture holding capacity, and improved soil structure. Compost shall meet the specifications below.
- All soil amendments should be free of stones, stumps, roots or other similar objects larger than 2 inches.
- All soil amendments should be free of glass, plastic, metal, and other deleterious materials.

Accounting for Soil Amendments in Sizing Calculations

No retention credit is given for amended soils alone. Amended soils should be used as part of HSC-2 Impervious Area Dispersion, and to increase the retention volume of Infiltration and Biotreatment BMPs.

Additional References

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Stormwater Technical Manual, Chapter 3:
http://www.laschools.org/employee/design/fs-studies-and-reports/download/white_paper_report_material/Storm_Water_Technical_Manual_2009-opt-red.pdf?version_id=76975850

Santa Barbara BMP Guidance Manual, Chapter 5:
http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/91D1FA75-C185-491E-A882-49EE17789DF8/0/Manual_071008_Final.pdf

- San Diego County LID Handbook Appendix 4 (Factsheet 30):
<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/LID-Appendices.pdf>