



SOIL AMENDMENTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Preserving and restoring healthy soils in Maple Valley.

Healthy soil is vital to a clean environment and healthy landscapes. Deep soil that is rich in organic material absorbs rainwater, helps prevent flooding and soil erosion and filters out water pollutants. Healthy soil also stores water and nutrients for plants to use in dry times, promoting healthy plants that require less irrigation, toxic pesticides, and other resources.

Land development and landscaping practices can damage these valuable soil functions by removing or compacting topsoil. The result is erosion, unhealthy landscapes that are difficult and expensive to maintain, polluted water, destroyed fish habitat, and increased need for costly stormwater management structures.

The City of Maple Valley Municipal Code 18.40.130(B)(2) requires any site disturbance permit holders to amend soils by adding compost after construction or implement other measures to maintain the soil's moisture holding capacity for areas that have been cleared and graded.

When amending soil, it is best to do so between May 1 and October 1.

Note: For Tree Protection Areas, Critical Areas and/or Sensitive Areas, leave native soil undisturbed and protect from compaction during construction. Avoid plowing or tilling within drip line of trees to be retained. Imported soil may be added within a trees drip line by nonmechanical means.

Option 1:

Amend existing soil in place.

Where the soil has been disturbed one option of amendment is to rototill compost into the existing soil.

- Apply a layer of compost to existing soil at the pre-approved amendment rate of a minimum of 2.5 inches.
- Use the City of Maple Valley Soil Amendment Calculation Worksheet to calculate the quantity of compost needed.
- Retain copies of compost test results and receipts for compost delivered to the site, as they will be used during inspection to verify the soil requirements have been met.
- Rototill compost into soil to a depth of at least 8 inches. Note that tilling to this depth will require repeated passes with a large machine, such as a tractor mounted or heavy rear tine rototiller.

Option 2:

Import topsoil mix with 8 – 13% soil organic matter content.

Where subsoil is too rocky, compacted or poorly drained to amend effectively, a topsoil mix with 8 – 13% soil organic matter can be imported and placed on the surface. “Manufactured” topsoil mixes should be weed free, making them ideal for seeding new lawns.

- Import and apply a topsoil mix with 8 – 13% soil organic matter, which should contain 30 – 40% compost by volume, and clean sand or sandy soil. The soil depth shall be a minimum of 8 inches and the pH suitable for proposed plants.
- Use the City of Maple Valley Soil Amendment Calculation Worksheet to calculate the quantity of compost needed.
- Ask topsoil suppliers for test results of their product to verify the material contains the desired organic matter content and pH. Retain copies of topsoil test results and receipts for topsoil delivered to the site, as they will be used during inspection to verify that the soil requirements have been met.
- Plow or till compacted subsoil at least 2 inches deep before applying topsoil mix, and/or rototill some of the newly applied topsoil into the subsoil.

Please contact the Planning Division at (425) 413-8800 if you have any questions.

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