



## **'How to use' guide for the range of Top Soils & Soil Conditioners supplied by Playbark.com**

Several considerations need to be assessed before selecting a specific bark, these considerations include:

- Budget
- Best Value
- Soil types
- **Budget:** Fortunately, when you purchase a product from Playbark.com, we have a concise range of top soils and soil conditioners we are confident we will have a product which suits all budgets and requirements.
- **Best Value:** This is a principle followed by many Local Authorities. All gardens are different, if one particular soil suits one area it may not all together suit another.

By having a more expensive product, in certain circumstances this may prove more cost effective than a less expensive product if the lesser priced product isn't suited to a certain application.

At Playbark.com we are certain we have a product which ticks all of the boxes, combining functionality with appearance whilst falling in line with budget.

If unsure, please ask for samples.

### **Soil Types (& thereafter plant selection):**

This process can be quite tricky as certain plants require different soil types. Ask at a reputable plant nursery or garden centre for advice regarding the soil conditions the specific plants enjoy or similarly check on a reputable website.

Most of our soils with the exception of our 'Lawn Soil' are slightly alkali, this is primarily due to it's organic compost content; consideration should be given to this when selecting the relevant plants.

## **The Creation of a new planting area.**

### **Drainage:**

It is essential the area which is being considered for use as a planted area has good drainage, if it doesn't, irrelevant of the soil purchased the area will become muddy, it could even flood which will be a sure way to waste money.

If the drainage is poor, handymen and DIY enthusiasts may be able to install a simple 'Herringbone' drainage system without costing the earth. Good examples can be viewed on YOUTUBE.

If this is one step too far, we suggest you talk to a reputable landscaper or ground worker.

### **Weed Removal:**

Before starting a project, annual and perennial weeds should be removed from the proposed area, not only are they unsightly but they will also compete with the plants for moisture, nutrients and light.

Removal may be performed manually by hand or chemically by applying a proprietary brand of weed killer, please read the label carefully if adopting this method.

### **New Schemes:**

Purchasing top soil is a quick way to create a new garden. Once a designated area has been suitably prepared with retaining edgings and the correct sub-base for adequate drainage, apply at a suitable depth. This will vary according to the objectives, plant species and age, suitable research should be performed regarding the appropriate depths.

For example, the requirements for semi mature trees will differ from a lawn and so on.

### **Lawn Creation:**

Although grass will adapt to growing in a depth of soil which is only of a minimal depth, our advice is to plan to allow for at least 150mm of quality soil; this will allow for credible root structure.

Ensure the new lawn has adequate drainage, this may require further investigation. Please contact our sales office for further, more 'site specific' advice.

### **Soil Conditioning:**

The incorporation of good quality top soil organic soil conditioning products can massively improve the soil structure and as a result can increase quicker plant establishment as well as improving moisture retention and nutrient uptake properties, simply apply 25-50mm of soil over the existing soil surface and incorporate accordingly.

If there are likely to be lime-hating plant species within the planted area, consider our Fine Grade Composted Bark product <http://www.playbark.com/content/fine-grade-composted-bark>

Alternatively, if after careful analysis a product with less acidity is required consider Ecoplant <http://www.playbark.com/content/ecoplant>

### **Fertiliser:**

Dependant on the soil condition, it may be worthwhile applying a 'pre-planting' fertiliser to encourage establishment. There are numerous proprietary products on the market to choose from and purchasing from a reputable garden centre who can advise upon product selection is always advised.

Additionally, it is a good idea to perform an annual application of fertiliser to ensure plants are receiving adequate nutrition.

### **Landscaping Fabric/Membrane:**

This is a very cost effective method in preventing the majority of weeds from emerging within a planted area prior to the application of bark.

Simply lay the fabric over the prepared area for planting and cut an 'X' configuration in it, large enough to plant the shrub through whilst allowing the folds to lay back down at ground level to ensure weed suppression.

Landscaping fabric will last for many years and is extremely effective. Being porous, it will allow moisture to pass through it into the soil structure.

<http://www.playbark.com/content/landscaping-fabric-weed-control-membrane>

Please note, woody perennial weeds being extremely robust and vigorous may pierce the membrane.

### **Rubber Edging:**

Ultimately, a planted area needs to start and stop, with this in mind to prevent the bark and soil from spilling onto paved or lawn areas, it is good practice to use an 'edging' product which is not only effective but is aesthetically pleasing.

Tanalised timbers can be used quite effectively, but for something 'softer' to the eye why not consider our Rubber Edging. A wonderful innovative idea, which provides a cost effective yet functional solution.

<http://www.playbark.com/content/rubber-border-edging>

### **Ongoing maintenance:**

Even though the application of quality bark products will suppress weed growth by up to 80%, it is inevitable the occasional annual and more so perennials weed will germinate and become visible within the planting area.

Either remove the weeds by hand ensuring the root is also excavated, or if using a proprietary systemic weed killer as a spot treatment, ensure you follow the correct safety procedures as stated on the label.

Dependant on the depth the bark has been applied at will determine how long it will last before the emergence of weeds become more prevalent.

Carefully raking the bark on the bed will assist in disturbing weed seeding establishment as well as cosmetically providing the surface with a fresh appearance.

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