

OUTLINE LANDSCAPE SPECIFICATION

All landscape operatives will be appropriately trained, certified and qualified to undertake the tasks required. When required, the relevant certificates will be made available for inspection. All work is to be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standards, Codes of Practice and Legislation.

1.SITE PREPARATION

Topsoil

Existing topsoil shall be stripped before building works begin. Should it be deemed suitable for re-used, following testing to BS BS3882: 2015, it shall be stored and handled in accordance with BS3882: 2015 to ensure it remains suitable for re-use. Imported topsoil shall be to BS3882: 2015 Specification for Topsoil.

Topsoil shall be multi-purpose grade, of medium texture, with a high proportion of fertile loamy material. It shall be free from subsoil, rubbish, rubble, contamination, roots of perennial weeds and other materials injurious to plant growth. The maximum stone content of the soil shall be 20%, with the maximum size of stone 25mm in any one dimension. All topsoil shall be stacked in heaps, not exceeding 2m high. During storage, topsoil heaps shall be kept free from compaction, contamination and weeds to BS3882: 2015.

Excavation

Areas to be planted / seeded shall be cleared of all surface rubbish and excavated to the dimensions below finished level as follows, when the soil is not waterlogged or frozen. Ensure the location of all services is known before any excavation operations.

- Tree pits: 1500 x 1500 x 650mm deep (or to 900mm deep if in-situ subsoil is not suitable for soft landscaping)
- Shrub and hedge pit / trench: 450mm deep (or to 600mm deep if in-situ subsoil is not suitable for soft landscaping)
- Wildflower and grass areas: 300mm deep (or to 450mm deep if in-situ subsoil is not suitable for soft landscaping)

The base of excavated areas shall be forked or otherwise cultivated to a depth of 150mm to facilitate drainage and all bricks, stones and other debris, etc. over 75mm in any one dimension shall be removed. Similarly, areas trafficked by construction vehicles shall be ripped to a depth of 150-300mm to relieve compaction.

Backfilling with Subsoil

Where excavated areas are lower than the required depths, excavations shall be backfilled with selected subsoil suitable for soft landscaping purposes, and lightly consolidated to make up levels. Selected subsoil shall be friable, second quality topsoil or similar and be free of rubbish, roots, stones over 15mm in any one dimension, perennial weeds or other materials injurious to plant growth to BS3601: 2013. Subsoil depths as follows:

- Tree pits: 600mm deep
- Shrub and hedge pit / trench: 300mm deep
- Grass areas: 300mm deep
- Wildflower areas: 300mm deep

Backfilling with Topsoil

Tree, shrub and hedge pit / trench excavations shall be backfilled, in layers, with clean topsoil (as specified above) thoroughly mixed with planting compost e.g. 'Metcout Topgrove' compost at a rate of 20 litres/m² for planting beds, and a non-peat based tree and plant mulching compost at a rate of 50 litres/m² for tree pits (compost to be worked into the top 200mm only). An approved slow-release tree and shrub fertilizer shall be added to topsoil, prior to backfilling tree-pits. Topsoil depths as follows:

- Tree pits: 300mm deep
- Shrub and hedge pit / trench: 300mm deep
- Grass areas: 150mm deep
- Wildflower areas: 50mm deep

Cultivation

Prior to cultivation if planting / seeding areas are weed infested, weed growth is to be stemmed, the arisings removed and re-growth treated with an approved herbicide i.e. Glyphosate. Treatment to be undertaken in the growing season preceding planting, at a minimum 4 weeks prior to works to allow for repeat treatment if necessary.

Cultivate to the following depths and till, removing all rubbish, vegetation, perennial weeds, roots, stones over 25mm in any one dimension and rake to even levels.

- Planting areas: 300mm deep cultivation to medium till
- Grass seeding areas: 100mm deep cultivation to fine till raked to a smooth evenly firm bed
- Turf areas: 150mm deep cultivation to medium till raked to a smooth evenly firm bed
- Wildflower turf areas: 50mm deep cultivation to fine till raked to a smooth evenly firm bed

2. PLANTING

Plant Stock and Timing

Plant material and operations shall conform to BS8545: 2014, BS 3936 Nursery Stock (Parts 1-11) 4428; 1989, BS 4043: 1989 and BS 5837: 2012, and be in accordance with the National Planting Scheme. Supplying nurseries shall be registered under the HTA Nursery Certification Scheme. All plants shall be packed and transported in accordance with the Code of Practice for Plant Handling as produced by CPSE.

The planting season shall be from the 1st October to the 31st March. Container grown stock may be planted outside this season if accompanied by daily watering, or as necessary to ensure healthy establishment. Planting shall not be carried out during periods of frost, drought, cold drying winds or when the soil is waterlogged or frozen.

Planting

All plants shall be set out evenly over the areas as indicated, to the density and quantities shown. All plants shall be planted upright at the same depth as the nursery soil level and evenly spaced, leaving room for growth. All restrictive containers shall be removed with roots not twisted. Immediately following planting, all plants shall be watered-in to field capacity.

Container grown and root balled plants shall be planted in a planting pit sufficient to accommodate the plant without causing root damage, with a minimum 50mm backfill beyond the root ball extent. Plants to be firmed, watered-in and dead, damaged or lopsided branches shall be removed after planting. Bare-root plants shall be st planted, incorporating an approved high phosphate, slow-release fertilizer.

Substitutions of planting stock is not to be undertaken without the prior approval of the project landscape architect.

Tree Planting and Support

Trees planted in landscape areas shall be installed as per tree planting detail. All trees to be firmed in after planting. All trees shall have irrigation / aeration system units fitted to fully surround the root ball. All trees to be watered-in to field capacity immediately after planting.

All extra heavy standard size trees are to be double staked with 75mm dia stakes. Stakes should be driven at least 300mm into undisturbed ground before planting the tree, taking care to avoid underground services and cables etc. and should typically be one third the height of the tree stem above ground.

Trees that have become loosened, lifted up or out of the ground to be set upright and re-firmed by breading. Tree supports to be regularly checked, adjusted, repaired and replaced as necessary and irrigation tubes to be kept free of blockages.

Tree stake ties to be adjusted (loosened or tightened) regularly to avoid asphyxiation of the tree trunk and to ensure rubbing does not occur in windy conditions.

Tree supports to be checked and when necessary adjusted, repaired removed or replaced, to ensure healthy unrestricted growth. If a tree support is no longer required as the tree is supporting itself, remove the tree support entirely. The tree support is generally removed around Year 3, however this judgement shall depend on how well the tree has established before tree support removal is considered. Tree guards / grilles of street trees are likely to require removal in the long term as the tree base / trunk expands.

Native Hedge and Shrub Planting

Bare-root plants shall be notch planted in a double staggered row at the rate of 7 plants per linear metre where planted as a hedge, or as per densities shown for planting areas, using U-shaped notches and spades of a design suitable for this purpose. The notches must be vertical and deep enough for the roots to hang freely, with the transplant being planted so that the root collar is exactly level with the ground surface. The notch must then be closed and the soil will be well firmed round the roots in line with the guidelines as set out in BS 4428 (1989).

All bare-root planting stock will be protected from rabbit damage using approved proprietary 600mm plastic-free shrub guards (e.g. GreenTech Bio-Earth Biodegradable Plastic-Free Shelter), supported with 0.9m 12/14lb canes as advised by the manufacturer.

Mulching

Prior to the application of mulch the planting areas shall be completely weed free and watered sufficiently to achieve field capacity. The surface of the planting areas shall be mulched with a 70-90mm depth layer of 15-65mm nominal particle size, dark, matured woodchip mulch, ensuring that the low branches of trees, shrubs and/or herbaceous plants are NOT smothered.

Mulch shall be an approved product and completely weed and weed seed free. The mulch shall be topped-up to maintain, after settlement, a depth of not less than 50mm. Trees in grass areas shall be planted centrally within a 1m diameter mulch bed, to be mulched to 75mm deep. The surface of mulch to be 10mm below the surface of adjacent lawn / hard surface.

BIODIVERSE LAWN AREAS

Grass Seeding

Areas of biodiverse lawn shall be seeded with a Biodiverse lawn grass mix during the period March to May or September to October, during periods of moist, warm weather conditions without significant wind. Pre-seeding fertiliser shall be applied to manufacturer's recommendations. Seed shall be sown on even, prepared ground (as detailed above), at a rate of 35g/m² or as specified, in two transverse operations. Lightly roll seed bed after sowing. Water as necessary to avoid shrinkage and achieve satisfactory establishment. Undertake good horticultural practice to ensure establishment of a healthy grass sward.

WILDFLOWER MEADOW GRASSLANDS

Preparation

Areas of wildflower meadow to be seeded shall be sprayed out with a glyphosate herbicide and cultivated to a depth of 100mm removing all weeds debris and stones over 75mm diameter. The surface shall be raked to smooth flowing contours with a fine till.

Seeding

Seeds shall be sown either in April/May or September/October during calm weather and not when the ground is frost bound or waterlogged. To achieve an even sowing, bulk with an inert carrier, such as sand. Seed shall be sown in two equal sowings in transverse directions at e.g. 4g/m² for Emergate, EM1 general purpose meadow mix. After sowing the contractor shall roll in the seed to guarantee intimate contact with the soil, ensuring not to rake or cover the seed with soil.

AFTERCARE PERIOD

Regular Visits

During the specified Aftercare Period maintenance visits shall be carried out, at least monthly from April to September and twice during the dormant season to carry out the following operations to establish healthy growing plants / grass in weed free areas: watering, firming-up, removal of litter, pest and disease control, general pruning, checking guards, ties and stakes, weed control, grass cutting and autumn tidying. All arisings shall be carted away and the site shall be left clean and tidy at all times.

Watering

All planting and grass areas shall not be allowed to dry out and shall be kept well-watered during the growing season, ensuring the soil is kept moist at all times but avoiding waterlogging.

Replacement Planting

During each August within the Aftercare Period an inspection shall be made and all plants that have died, are missing, damaged or have failed to thrive, shall be noted and replaced in the following planting season.

Amenity Grass Cutting

During the first and subsequent growing seasons amenity grass shall be kept at a height of 25mm to 50mm. Any bare patches are to be resown. Selective weed control shall be undertaken as necessary once the sward is sufficiently established.

Wildflower Meadow Cutting: Seeded

During first 12 months sward to be regularly cut to minimise competition and weed seed production. Cutting should be frequent enough to disperse the cuttings, or if less frequent remove the cuttings. When newly seeded wildflower areas reach 50mm they should be cut to a height of 25mm. All arising's shall be removed. Any bare patches shall be made good at this time.

