



TIM O'HARE ASSOCIATES
SOIL & LANDSCAPE CONSULTANCY

An Introduction to BS3882:2007

Tim O'Hare Associates LLP

(on behalf of British Sugar TOPSOIL)

TOPSOIL

The 1994 Version

- BS3882:1994 had a number of limitations
- It was too academic and not contractually sound
- All the information was there but it was not easy to find – *“full of analytical methods”*
- Everyone just looked at ‘Table 2’

The 1994 Version

- Silt & Clay were too high
- Premium = Natural Topsoil only
- Economy Grade = Subsoil
- No Structure = General Purpose
- Premium Grade was over-specified



BS3882:2007

- The British Standard specifies the requirements for Topsoil that is to be **imported or traded**
- It is not intended (or appropriate) for the assessment of topsoil that remains **in-situ**
- Transporting soil involves mechanical handling (e.g. excavation and loading). Not all naturally-occurring soils 'survive' such intensive handling to retain the ability to function properly

BS3882:2007

- ***Manufactured Topsoil*** has been given the same status as ***Natural Topsoil***

Two Grades:

- Multipurpose
- Specific Purpose

Additional information on:

- Soil Sampling
- Soil Handling and Storage
- Subsoil Preparation
- Topsoil Spreading
- Declaration of Analysis

Multipurpose

“If correctly handled, placed over a non-compact subsoil and managed appropriately (including attention to drainage), Multipurpose Topsoil is capable of sustainably supporting grass, trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and other plantings”

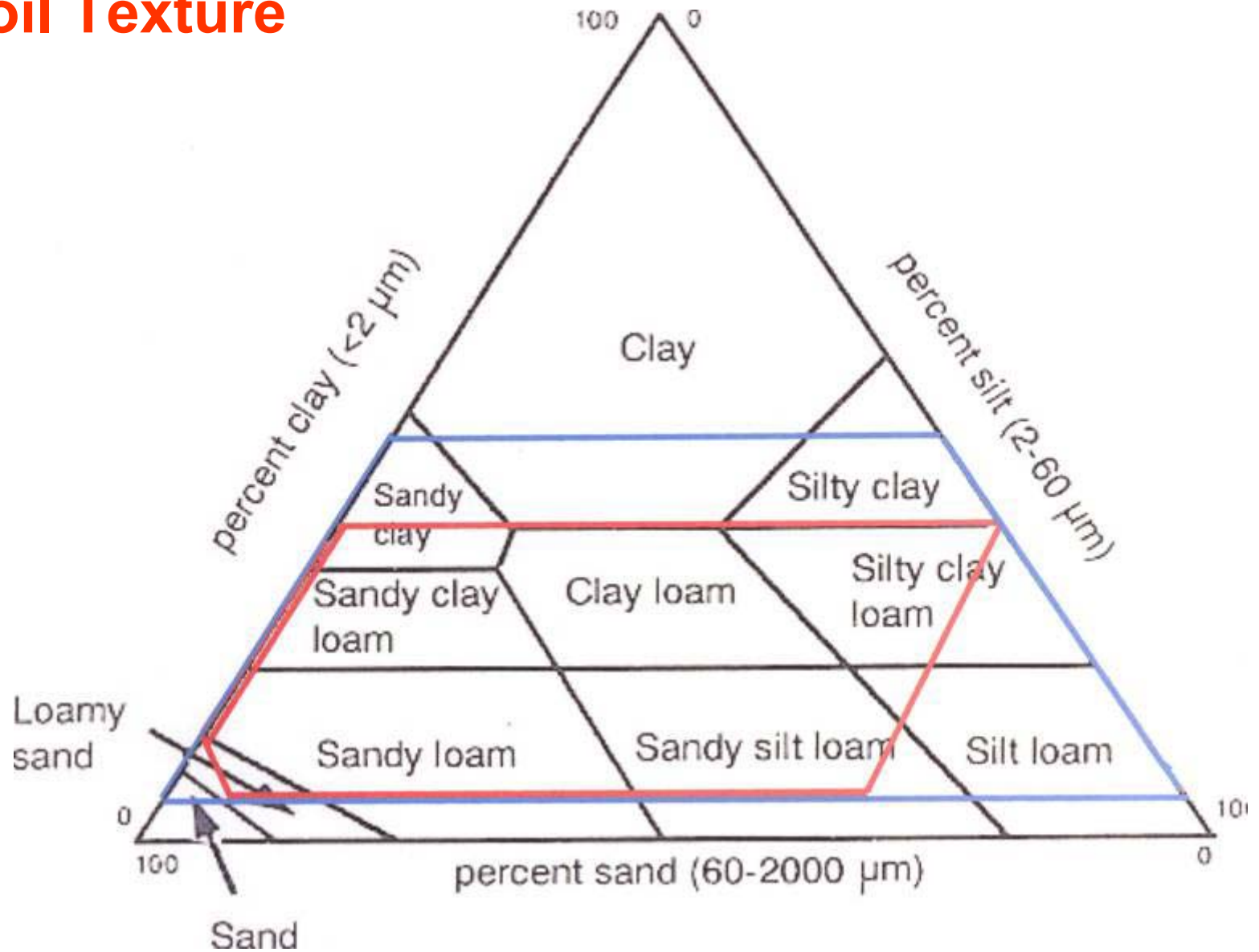
- This is a grade suited to most situations where topsoil is required
- However, there can be situations where specific purpose topsoil is required
- Some natural topsoils, especially clayey or low organic silty topsoils, might not be able to survive the handling involved with imported topsoil

Specific Purpose

“Specific purpose topsoil comprises characteristics appropriate for specialist applications, e.g.. supporting the growth of certain plants or plant communities”

- Specific purpose topsoil can be specified by one or more of the following qualifiers:
 - Low fertility
 - Acidic
 - Calcareous
- These soils are not appropriate for general landscaping projects

Soil Texture



Sampling

- **Sampling in-situ** using a 'W' or 'grid' pattern
- As part of a Soil Resource Survey - Not a geotechnical investigation
- Sampling from a **stockpile**
- 1 composite sample : 5000m³ minimum

Soil Handling and Storage

- To minimise damage through compaction
- Protection of watercourses from runoff and flooding
- Segregation of topsoil from other soils and building materials
- Minimise soil erosion and weed establishment by sowing and maintaining a grass/legume

Declaration of Analysis

Topsoil Suppliers will be required to provide a Declaration of Analysis

This will include:

- **Location** of topsoil source, and previous and current land use for Natural Soils
- **Date** of Sampling and Analysis
- **Test results** including Contamination Parameters
- **Written confirmation** of compliance with the relevant Topsoil Grade in BS3882:2007

Conclusions

- BS3882:2007 is an evolution from 1994
- Improvements have been made based on 12 years experience
- It addresses other important issues including Subsoil

And finally... no one specification can be suitable for all landscape projects so use with caution.

Further Information

- Copies of BS3882:2007 are available from:
 - BSI Customer Services Department on 0208 996 9001
 - The cost of the Standard is £102 for non-BSI members and £51 for BSI members
- For further information on:
 - Tim O'Hare Associates go to www.toha.co.uk
 - British Sugar TOPSOIL go to www.bstopsoil.co.uk