

The hot recipe for turning 'Sand into Soil' Great Gardens

The straight away things...

1. Dig it! Dig the planting hole to be at least 3–4 times the *width* of the plant pot and to about 30–40cm deep. Break through any compaction that make be there.

Note: If the hole collapses in on itself almost as quickly as you can pull the sand out with the shovel then you will need to deal with water repellency first. Add a handful of wetting agent into the hole and then soak with the hose at high pressure till the frothy water fills the hole, wait till this subsides before moving onto step 2.

Potential water savings: 10–20%

2. Put in the good stuff.

For large blank areas:

Mix in roughly 30L of compost OR soil conditioner per m² as well as 2–5kg/m² of Bentonite clay, Zeolite and OR spongelite. Mix this all in thoroughly to a depth of about 20–30cm.

For individual planting holes:

Make up a mixture of good quality soil improvement to roughly this ratio:

½ a bucket of Compost and OR soil conditioner

1 big cupped handful of soil amendment (ie Bentonite Clay, Zeolite and OR Spongelite)

2 handfuls of animal manure if you wish

1 handful of water saving gel if you wish

Add this in a 50:50 mix with the 'in situ' soil and mix thoroughly into the planting hole. The sand should now be soil - darker in colour and firmer and with more structure.

Potential water savings: 10–20%

3. Plant your plant

Make sure you use good quality plants and cut any coiled and bound roots with a sharp clean knife to liberate the plant. Then plant into a shallow basin to collect and harvest water for the plant.

(Note in clays you would plant on a slight mound). Sprinkle wetting agent around the planting dish and water in well with a seaweed tonic. Remember autumn is the best time to plant on the Perth sands and so if you are planting in summer you will need to water 1-2 times a week for the first summer to get them through.

Potential water Savings: 10-20%

4. Mulch, mulch, mulch!!

Add a rough course mulch around the plant to at least 1/4m² area and 50-70mm thick. Good mulches include street tree pruning mulch, pine bark mulch, stone or gravel.

Potential water Savings: 10-20%