

SOIL AMENDMENTS: THE FAST FOOD APPROACH TO BUILDING SOILS



DAVID BAUER, PSS, CPESC

Metro Water Resource

Minnesota Department of Transportations

Abstract

If natural soils are fine dining, then manufactured soil (soil created with amendments) is fast food – not all the nutrients, but it can still get the job done. Like fast food, there are some important keys for success. Both depend on the ingredients. This presentation will answer a few questions about the ingredients of a fast food soil, such as: Where do the parts come from? How are soil components stored and treated? How tight do specifications need to be? Some ingredients are simple, as shown in the success of topsoil harvesting and application on the current 694- Snelling Avenue project in Arden Hills. Some are highly technical, such as rejecting components due to pH or clay content while building an athletic field for Mahtomedi schools. The industry is varied and the rule of thumb is to treat each site as unique and address its needs.

Biography

Dave Bauer discovered soil when he was 5 years old and his younger playmate started eating dirt. Encouraged by his friend, Dave tried some too, but spat it out after sand rasped against his teeth. He took two lessons from the experience – peer pressure is not necessarily good, and soil has sand in it. From that moment, he was fascinated with soil. Dave is now a licensed professional soil scientist and started working as a hydrologist for MnDOT in August. In his career he has inspected over a thousand raingardens and their biofiltration cousins, paying close attention to how water moves through the soil. Personally, Dave coaches high school sports, is part of the local independent movie scene, and is a member of Mensa.