

## **2.4.5 Soil Conditioning and Mulching**

- A. A minimum of 3 inches of organic mulch shall be added in non-turf areas to the soil surface after planting.
- B. Non-porous material such as sheet plastic shall not be placed under the mulch.
- C. A minimum of 6" permeable soil, native or imported and meeting the requirements of Standard Specification 601S, shall be required for turf and landscaped areas.
- D. Tree planting areas are to be provided with a minimum of 12 inches of friable native loam soil meeting the requirements of Standard Specification 601S. Planting in relatively undisturbed existing native soils is encouraged. Soil to a minimum depth of 12 inches is required within the entire landscape median or peninsula. All other planting areas must have a minimum soil depth of 12 inches within a radius of six feet from the tree trunk. Trees are not to be planted in caliche, solid rock, or, in soils whose texture has been compacted by construction equipment. Areas of compaction which have been subsequently amended with 12 inches of friable native soil are suitable for planting.

### **2.4.5.1 Aggregate Soil Cover**

- A. § 25-2-1003 (D) of the Land Development Code allows a required landscape area to include aggregate if inorganic materials do not predominate over the plants. For the purposes of this requirement, the following describes criteria for use of aggregate in a required landscape area.
  - 1) Aggregate may not be used in place of soil as a planting medium when the proposed use is in a planting bed.
  - 2) Aggregate may be used as a soil cover only if the following requirements are met.
    - a. The aggregate does not exceed 20% aerial coverage of the required landscape area.
    - b. Placement is limited to the street yard and non-street yard parking islands and medians, or in areas of complete shade from buildings.
    - c. Placement is limited to slopes of 5% gradient or less. Rock should be sized appropriately for the slope to provide stabilization.
    - d. The aggregate is used in conjunction with a minimum 6" soil base; the aggregate may not exceed 3" in depth.
    - e. Use of aggregate is limited to washed and screened materials that are free of "fines" in order to aid in water infiltration.

- f. Aggregate size must be greater than the No. 4 Sieve (4.75mm) and smaller than 3 inches.
- g. No less than 50% of the aggregate area shall be shaded with plant canopies. This percentage of aggregate coverage shall be calculated from the areal coverage of existing plants and new plantings at mature growth.
- h. Polypropylene and non-porous based weed barrier is not used.
- i. If irrigation is used in a planting bed, irrigation is limited to drip irrigation only.
- j. Aggregate must be installed to prevent migration of material over time.
- k. This section does not eliminate tree planting and/or existing tree protection requirements of the Environmental Criteria and Standards Manuals.

Standards Manual-Figure 3-14 Tree Planting Detail, and

Environmental Criteria Manual 3.5.2 Tree Preservation Criteria

3) Aggregate may not be used in the City of Austin Right-of-Way.

B. This criteria does not apply in ECM Section 2.7.0 HILL COUNTRY ROADWAY LANDSCAPE CRITERIA.

## **GLOSSARY**

**Predominate- verb (used without object),** 1. to be the stronger or leading element or force 2. to have numerical superiority or advantage 3. to surpass others in authority or influence; be preeminent 4. to have or exert controlling power (often followed by over 5. to appear more noticeable or imposing than something else.

**Aggregate-** A broad category of coarse inert particulate material used in construction, including sand, gravel, crushed stone, or glass.

**Mulch (organic)-** Organic mulches are those that are made up of decomposing plant parts such as shells, hulls, bark, leaves, hardwoods and softwoods. Organic mulch provides root protection, keeps the soil and roots cooler, and adds organic matter as it decomposes.