Soil & Mulch

Annie Barrow
Manager of Sustainable Landscape Services
Right Practice: Soils

Amend the soil with inorganic material sized ¼" and smaller

SQUEEGEE rock is ¼" rock and smaller

• Inorganic material creates pockets of air and results in increased porosity which allows water to penetrate and get to roots quickly
• Many plants that thrive in our climate prefer lean soil and good drainage as opposed to rich organic soils.
• Organic matter and wood mulch are not ideal for many xeric, native and other plants that thrive on the Front Range

These recommendations are for xeric and low water landscapes. Does not apply to vegetables, annuals, etc.
How to Remove Turf

Remove sod with sodcutter (rented) or by hand (next to trees). Compost at local dump.
How to amend with squeegee rock

Topdress with 2-3” squeegee
How to plant in squeegee rock

- Layout plants
- Move squeegee aside
- Dig hole to accommodate container size
- Mix squeegee with existing soil
- Place plant and fill in with mix
Rock mulch is what we use in many areas at Denver Botanic Gardens.
Using inorganic material follows nature’s cue.
Use a Fine Organic Mulch

- Organic mulch should be 1" and smaller
- Amend backfill with 50% squeegee rock/inorganic material
- Compost may be amended into soil
- Mulch with fine organic mulch

Very fine mulch is what we use in shady areas and for traditional, non-native plants.
Avoid Using Large Wood Mulch

- Large wood mulch takes a long time to break down due to lack of soil microbiota and limited moisture
- Large wood mulch absorbs/hold water away from plant roots
- Can lead to crown rot
- Being dark in color, water may evaporate prior to reaching roots
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Annie Barrow, manager of sustainable landscape services
773-412-3776 | horticulture@botanicgardens.org