

3: Landscaping

3a: Overview

We do landscaping when an area of ground needs to be changed. Some common reasons for this are:

- Repair of damage caused by footfall, water, off-roading
- Obliteration of unwanted paths, braiding and desire lines
- Changing the line of a path
- Keeping path users on the approved path and away from sensitive areas
- Deterring off-roading by cars and bikes

How this is done varies according to circumstances and need. Basic approaches are:

Surface

- **Blanket turf:** a new covering of turf laid over the area.
- **Spot turf:** slabs of turf spaced out at intervals over the area so that they take root and spread out over time. This is done when turf is scarce.
- **Raking:** smoothing out the tracks made in desert gravel by off-roading cars or bikes.
- **Roughening:** creating with turf and rocks a surface which, while natural to look at, is uninviting and difficult to walk on.
- **Moss Transplanting:** replacing damaged areas with moss taken from a donor site. This is done either by taking slabs of moss and fitting them into the damaged area or by shredding moss and scattering it over the surface to regrow there.

Features

- **Rocks:** rocks and boulders are placed alongside a path to inhibit moving away from it. They can also be arranged in the area around a highland road to create a visual deterrent to driving off the road.
- **Banks:** these can be built at the side of a road or path where there is a need to discourage drivers or walkers from going off.

(Continued)

3: Landscaping

3a: Overview (Continued)

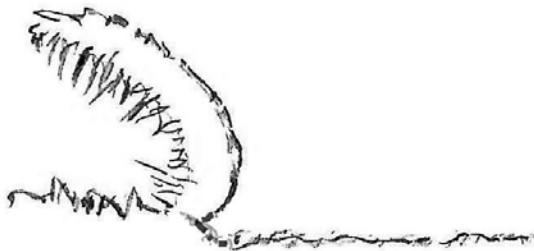
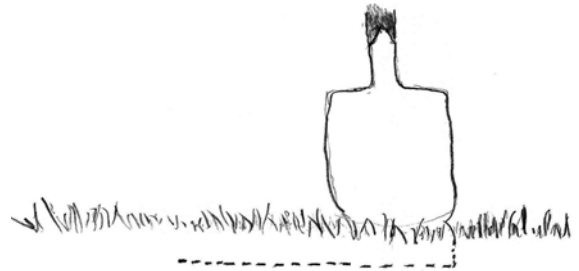
- **Dead hedges:** twigs and brushwood are woven together to make a 'hedge'. This is useful where there is a need for a temporary physical barrier, for instance when a path has been closed and replaced with new landscaping. In the time it takes for the hedge to disintegrate the new landscaping has time to become established.
- **Shrubs and small trees:** planting these can give a natural appearance and can serve as deterrents.
- **Gulleys:** A grass-lined gully can sometimes be used in a slope above a path to collect water as it runs down the slope and redirect it away from the path.

3: Landscaping

b: Working with Turf

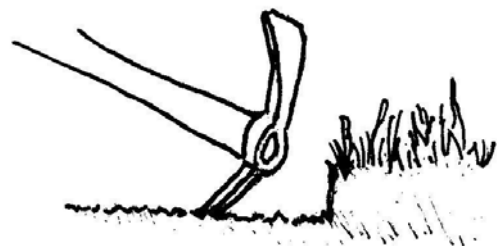
Usually we take turf from a donor site near the job site. It should be taken up in small amounts from scattered places to avoid creating a new bare area. These places should be out of sight of the path. The bare patches left behind are, if they are small, quickly recolonised by the surrounding vegetation.

Cut around the piece of turf you wish to take up. Don't make it so big you can't carry it.



With your spade, undercut the turf, roll it back, and lift it. You need to take roots and soil too, but don't make the piece too thick because this will make it difficult to carry and will require more digging in when you lay it.

Prepare the ground to receive your turf: loosen the soil it will lay on and make sure the depth and shape of the tray will make a good fit.



3: Landscaping

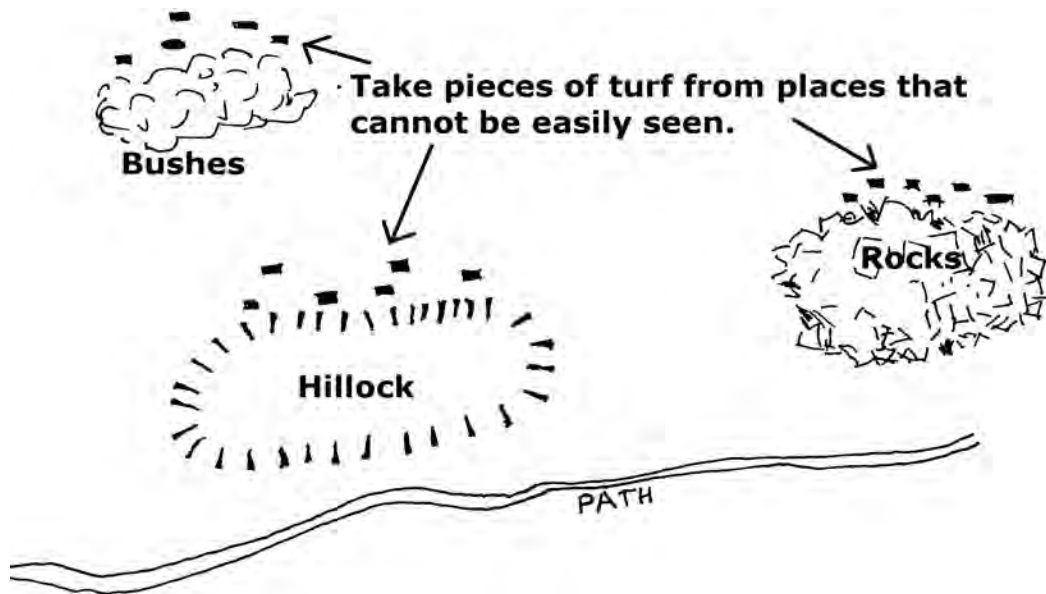
3b: Working with Turf (Continued)

Fit the turf pieces together to make a continuous covering. Make sure they fit tightly together and are at the same level.



If there are any spaces left between the pieces, pack them tightly with soil.

And don't forget, when you are getting turf ...

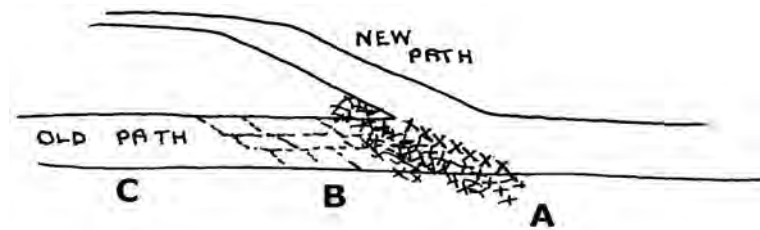


3: Landscaping

3c: Obliterating an Unwanted Path (i)

In this example walkers are directed into a new path and away from a previously used one.

The old path is obliterated by covering it with turf (B) so that it is indistinguishable from its surroundings.



For some time after the work has been done, and until the turf has blended in, it will be possible to see the line of the old path. To prevent people from walking along it we can use a dead hedge (A) to create a temporary barrier.



To do this, branches and twigs are stuck in the ground and interwoven with bushy twigs and foliage to make an artificial hedge. This will of course wither away eventually. But while that is happening the newly laid turf has time to grow and blend in with its surroundings.

If there is not enough turf to obliterate all of the old path, it should be laid for as far as possible from the junction (B,C). The rest of the path will at least be made difficult to reach and will naturalise in time. If there is a point in the old path where it turns out of sight, it is a good idea to lay the turf as far as that point so that the bare section is invisible from the junction. It is also helpful, if turf is scarce, to use some of it for 'spot' turfing, i.e. planting pieces of turf at spaced out intervals so that they can spread out over time.

For an alternative method see *Trailwork Basics 3c, Landscaping - Obliterating an Unwanted Path (ii)*.

3: Landscaping

3c: Obliterating an Unwanted Path (ii)

This section describes a project devised and led by Icelandic professionals Gunnar Óli Guðjónsson and Guðjón Stefán Kristinsson at Djupalon in Snaefellsnes and carried out under their direction by ICV trainees.

A poor quality path and a desire line (fig.1) are being replaced with one good path. The desire line (foreground) is to be obliterated and landscaped to look natural again, and made uninviting to walk on.



(fig.1)

(figs. 2,3) The ground in and around the desire line is thoroughly disturbed.



(fig. 2)



(fig. 3)

Ground beside the path is included so that the edge line between the desire line and its surroundings is lost.

(Continued)

3: Landscaping

3c: Obliterating an Unwanted Path (ii) (Continued)

Turf is laid at irregular levels across the area and rocks are placed to break up the line of sight. *(fig.4)*



The final result is a piece of rough ground that looks totally part of its surroundings yet is most uninviting to walk on *(fig.5)*.

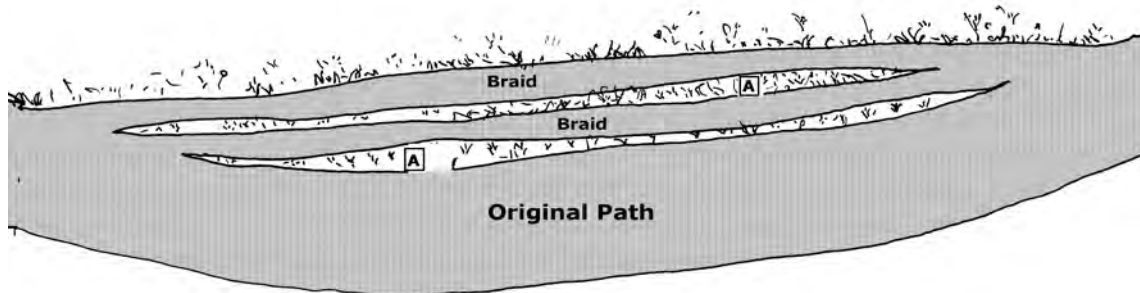


(fig.5)

3: Landscaping

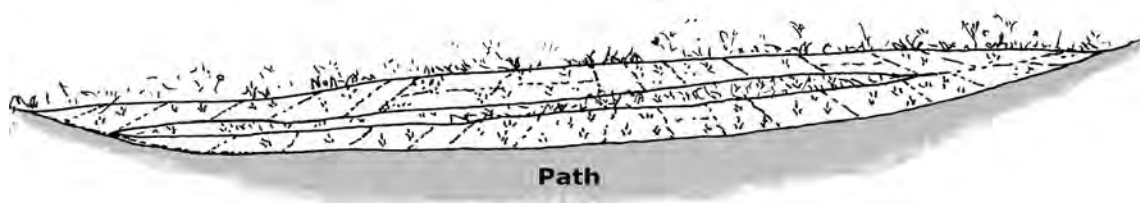
3d: Braiding

fig.1: Secondary paths – braids - have been worn by people walking beside the original path. Islands of turf have been left between them (A).



(fig.1)

fig.2: If widening is thought necessary, this is done, and new edges defined. Then worn areas are repaired by fitting in slabs of turf. Here the turf from one of the 'islands' has been taken up and used for this, along with new turf brought from a donor site.



(fig.2)

Fig.3: To prevent the problem happening again, rocks and humps are used along the edge to discourage people from stepping away from the path. They also give the edge a more natural appearance.



(Fig.3)

See also *Landscaping 3b - Working with Turf*

3: Landscaping

3e: Off-Roaders

Typical disfigurement of the beautiful smooth desert gravel, caused by irresponsible drivers leaving the road and playing games. If left, the marks become permanent. Also, other drivers may see the tracks as an invitation to do the same and add their tracks to the mess.



The tracks are gently smoothed out with rakes. The rake can be used in the normal way (points down), or it can be turned over and the back used for a gentler touch. A stiff sweeping brush can also be useful for finishing touches.



(Continued)

3: Landscaping

3e: Off-Roaders (Continued)



It is impossible to remove all evidence of the tracks but a season or two of weathering will finish the job.

Tracks in moss are a much more difficult problem. The compressed earth makes growing conditions different from the surroundings, which alters the species growing there. This becomes permanent and is impossible to deal with except by removal and replanting which in these conditions is unfeasible. The only remedy is prevention – by education and rigorous policing by rangers.



See also *Landscaping 3f - Working with Moss*

3: Landscaping

3f: Working with Moss

Transplanting

Slabs of moss are taken from a donor site.

The site should have enough moss for it to be undamaged by the removal of a comparatively small amount.

The moss should be taken in pieces from scattered locations so that a large bare patch is not created.

It should be taken from places not easily seen.



Try to move around the site without damaging the moss. Step on rocks where possible. Do not walk repeatedly on the same piece of moss: it is very fragile and can be killed by being stepped on as few as 5 times. A flat board is used to carry the moss.

With a flat trowel or knife, cut out a slab of moss. In order for it to have a good chance of surviving the move, it should be no smaller than about 60cm square.

It is very fragile indeed and will break apart if roughly handled.



(Continued)

3: Landscaping

3f: Working with Moss: Transplanting (Continued)

Do not attempt to lift the piece as it will break up easily.

Instead, gently push the board under the moss, between it and the bedrock or gravel it is growing on.

It can then be lifted away on the board.



To protect it from breaking apart during transit, string is tied round each piece.



The pieces are taken to the work site...



(Continued)

1.3: Landscaping

3f: Working with Moss: Transplanting (Continued)

... where they can be fitted into prepared places.



The piece should be an exact fit with the moss around it. There should be no gaps; joints should be tight. If not, the piece will be stripped away by harsh weather.



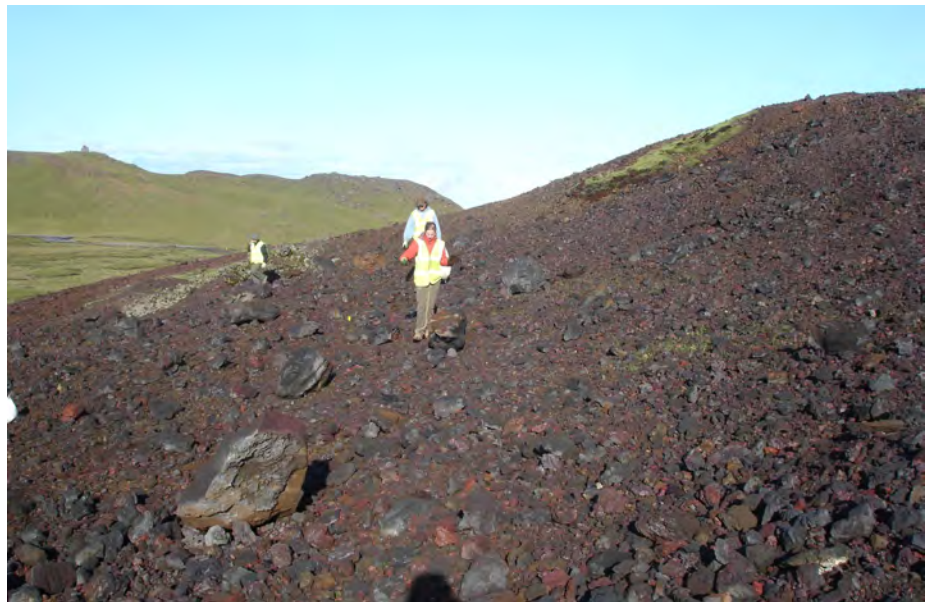
See also *Trailwork Basics 3f - Working with Moss: Seeding*

3: Landscaping

3f: Working with Moss

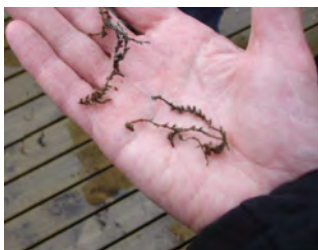
Seeding

When there is a need to regenerate a large area, moss from a donor site is shredded into small pieces and scattered evenly over the surface. This becomes established to form a new covering over the area. It is a long term strategy.



The examples here are from a project at the Hellisheiði power plant near Reykjavík. Moss which would have been destroyed during building works was instead taken up and used to reseed areas which had been destroyed by previous land users.

Working ahead of the developers the moss was taken up and bagged, then shredded by hand.



It was then scattered evenly over the surface being regenerated.



See also *Trailwork Basics 3f: Working with Moss: Transplanting*