Small scale drainage projects need not be costly

This month James de Haviland looks at ‘DIY’ drainage solutions...

If water is collecting in areas that were once free draining, the first job is to find out why. Digging a small hole with a spade or taking a core sample can help identify if there is a compaction layer and its depth. Regular spike tests can also help spot when a compaction problem is building. Deep aeration may cure the problem. In other cases, an existing primary drainage system may not be functioning as well as it could. Blocked, collapsed and settled main drains obviously will not work as well as they should and will struggle in a really wet period. If these drains feed into open ditches, it also follows that water needs to be able to get away.

With the basics in place, supplementing an existing system with improved drainage supplies, seeks to speed its passage through the soil. This can be done by installing a slit or trench backfilled with sand, gravel or purpose developed material such as Lytag. Or a new run of drainage pipe can be installed and linked to an existing pipe.

Tools that can be used to create backfilled drainage slits include the AFT Sandbander that comprises a 1.9 cubic metre stainless steel hopper and hydraulically powered vibrating single filling blade. It can create a 25mm wide slit to a depth of 250mm. The AFT 80 sand bander is similarly effective when ordering drainage project supplies, seek a specialist.

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