

## Identification of Soil Types

The United States Department of Agriculture defines soil separates as having the following diameters in millimeters: very coarse sand 2 to 1; coarse sand 1 to 0.50; medium sand 0.50 to 0.25; fine sand 0.25 to 0.10; very fine sand 0.10 to .05; silt .05 to .002; and clay below .002 millimeter.

### SAND:

Sand is loose and single grained. The individual grains can be seen or felt. Squeezed in the hand when dry, it will fall apart when pressure is released. Squeezed when moist; it still forms a cast, but will crumble.

### SANDY LOAM:

A sandy loam is a soil containing mostly sand but which has enough silt and clay to make it somewhat coherent. Squeezed when dry, it will form a cast which will fall apart; but if squeezed when moist, a cast can be formed that will bear carefully handling without crumbling.

### LOAM:

A loam is a soil having a mixture of the different grades of sand, silt, and clay in such proportion that the characteristics of no one predominate. Squeezed when dry, it will form a cast that will bear careful handling, while the cast formed by squeezing the moist soil can be handled quite freely without crumbling.

### SILT LOAM:

A silt loam is a soil having a moderate amount of the fine grades of sand and only a small amount of clay over half of the particles being of the size called "silt". When dry, it may appear quite cloddy, but the lumps can be readily broken; and when pulverized, it feels smooth, soft, and floury. When wet, the soil readily runs together. Either dry or moist, it will form casts that can be freely handled without breaking.

### CLAY LOAM:

A clay loam is fine-textured which usually breaks into clods or lumps that are hard when dry. When the moist soil is pinched between thumb and finger, it will form a thin "ribbon" which will break barely sustaining its own weight. The moist soil is elastic and will form a cast that will bear much handling. When kneaded in the hand, it does not crumble easily.

### CLAY:

A clay is a fine-textured soil that usually forms very hard lumps or clods when dry and is quite elastic and usually sticky when wet. When the moist soil is pinched out between the thumb and finger, it will form a long, flexible "ribbon".

Source: Our Collaborator

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