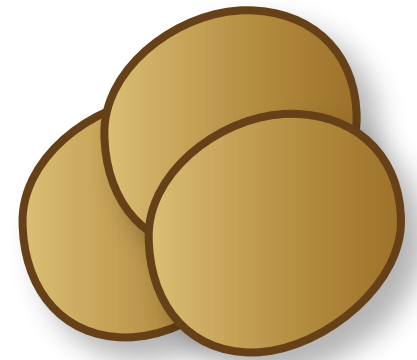


Types of Soil

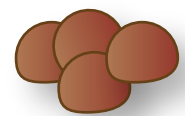
Soil differs greatly from place to place, but all soil is made up of different amounts of three types of particles: sand, silt and clay.

What are the types of soil particles?

Sand is the largest particle found in soil. When you rub it, it feels rough and gritty. Sand does not have many nutrients, but it dries quickly after rainfall, and it is good for *drainage*, which means it lets water flow through it easily.



Silt is the medium-sized particle found in soil. Silt feels smooth and powdery when dry, and it feels slippery when wet. Silt can be packed down into a crust that makes it harder for water and air to pass through it.



Clay is the smallest particle found in soil. Clay feels smooth and hard as stone when dry, and it feels sticky when wet. While clay can hold many nutrients, it does not allow much air or water to pass through. Too much clay can make the soil heavy and not good for growing plants.



Loam is a mix of sand, silt and clay. It is the best type of soil for growing plants. Loam breaks up easily and holds moisture and nutrients, while still allowing some water and air to pass through.

Types of Soil

Response Questions

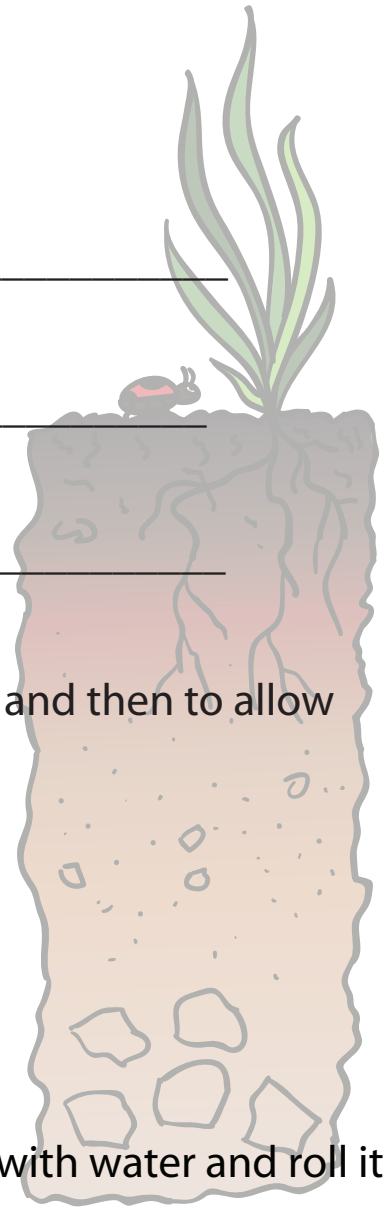
Which soil type can become hard as stone when dry? _____

Which soil type dries out quickly after a rainfall? _____

Which soil type would be best for building a structure? _____

Which soil type would a gardener need to break up every now and then to allow more drainage? _____

Which soil type would a cactus do well in? _____



TRY THIS!

Dig down at least six inches and grab a handful of soil. Soak it with water and roll it into a ball in your hand.



Sand

If you cannot make a ball out of it, it is mostly **sand**.



Silt

If it forms a loose ball but crumbles when squeezed it is mostly **silt**.



Clay

If it forms a packed ball and can be reshaped into a snake, it is mostly **clay**.