Testing Your Own Soil:

Good soil starts with a balanced level of all necessary elements. Using this guide, you are looking for approximates of 30% sand, 30% silt, 25% clay and 3 to 15% organic matter, depending on what your yield is. All amounts will fluctuate so aiming for something close to those values is the ideal “Loam” for plant growth. Organic matter (OM) is very important for all the cycles to function; grasses need less OM than woody plants.

More organic matter, means more biology is decomposing and extracting minerals for your plants while maintaining hydration! Deep, extensive root systems connected to fungi mean plants have more resilience to environmental variations.

Find out if your soil has the right mix of ingredients by using a glass jar, half filled with rain or distilled water.

You need to take approximately 200ml worth of soil from the top 30cm of the area you want to test. Add this soil to the jar with your water. Close the jar and shake until so all particles become suspended in the water. Place the jar somewhere safe and watch what happens. The sand will settle to the bottom first, then it takes a few hours for the silt to rest on top of that. The small clay particles can stay in suspension for hours and most of the organic matter will float to the top.

Wait 24 to 30 hours then measure the height of each layer. See example below for determining the percentage of each element in your soil sample.

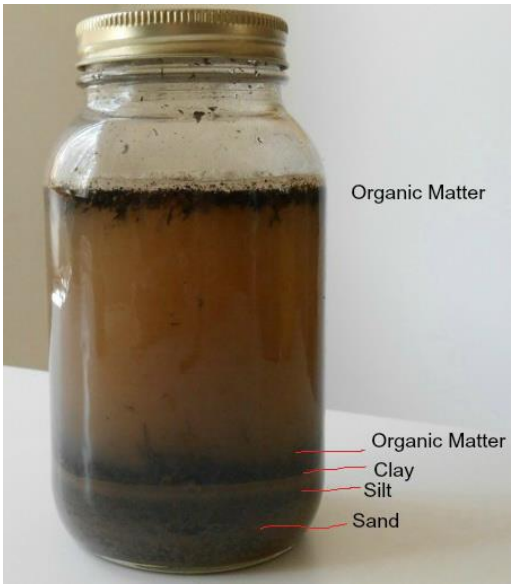
150mm total water

25mm Sand; **Example- 25 divide by 150= 0.16x100= 16%**

20mm Silt

20mm Clay

15mm OM



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