



Homegrown Horticulture

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

What is "Soil Texture"

Soil texture is the term that is used to describe the mineral components of a particular soil less than 2mm in size.

Specifically, it looks at the percentage or proportion of different small mineral particles (sand, silt, and clay) in the soil. The size of the particles affects that size of the pore spaces in the soil, which relates to water and air balance. It also helps you to understand how much water a soil can hold, how quickly a soil will drain, and how quickly a soil will likely dry out. It can also influence how a soil will hold onto nutrients.

There are 3 types or sizes of soil mineral particles and the percentage of each defines the texture.

Sand particles are the largest (0.05-2mm) and sandy soils are described as light or coarse textured. They have large pore spaces and drain/dry out quickly.

Silt particles are next largest (0.002-0.05mm) and are sometimes described as smooth or medium. They have moderate porosity.

Clay particles are the smallest (less than 0.002mm). They are described as heavy or fine, with small pore spaces. They are slow to drain (compared to sand) and hold water and nutrients tightly.

Terms that relate to soil texture include heavy, light, loam/loamy (a moderately textured soil), sticky, smooth, coarse, fine, medium.

