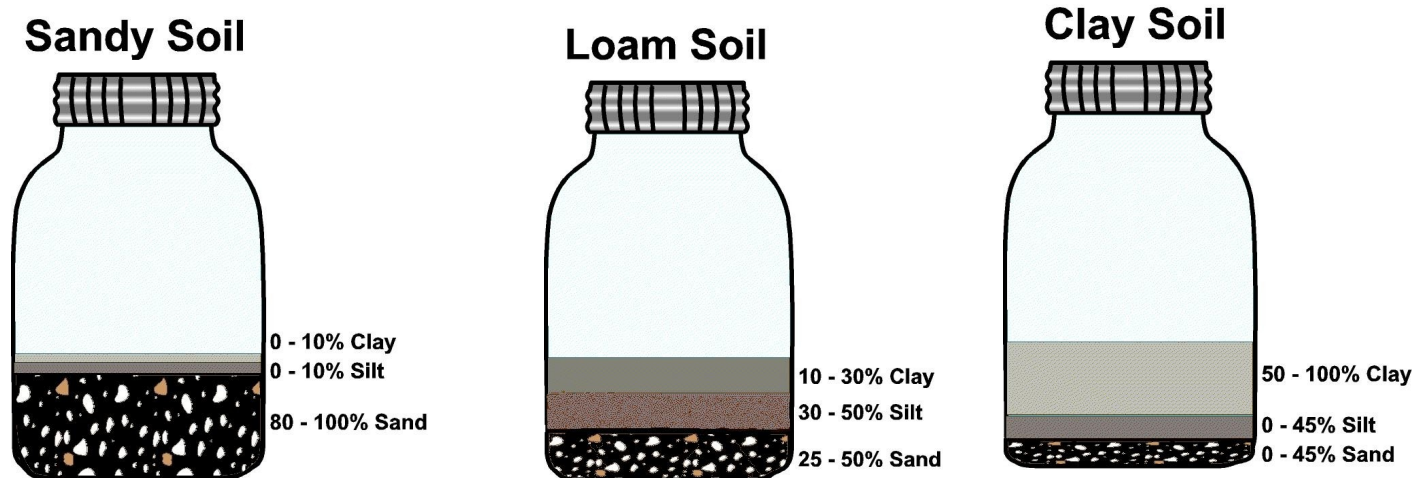


Evaluating Your Soil Texture

Dig six inches into the soil, mix up the loose dirt, and remove any small stones, soil lumps and roots. Fill a wide-mouth quart canning jar half full of the soil. Wet the soil to the consistency of mud. Tap the jar on a flat surface to settle the soil and mark the level of soil on the jar.

Add enough water to fill the jar. A tablespoon of dry dishwashing detergent will provide a surfactant, which keeps the soil particles separate and gives a more accurate test. Replace the lid and shake the jar several minutes until the soil, detergent and water are completely mixed. Put the jar on a flat surface and let the soil settle out.

When you see three distinct layers, mark the levels on the side of the jar using a permanent black marker. Sand is the heaviest and will settle out of the mixture in a minute or two. Silt will settle out after about an hour. Clay is the lightest and can take from several hours to a day to settle out of the solution. The clay layer on top will be fine textured and light in color.



Put your name on the jar lid and bring the jar to the class. Try to avoid movement as much as possible while transporting it to minimize stirring it up.

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