



Keywords for Soils Module

The purpose of this list is to help you focus on the important keywords from all the educational materials. Please note, these words and definitions do not need to be memorized. Keywords on this list appear in order of appearance in the manual.

Humus	Organic material that is very highly decayed and stable.
Parent Material	The geologic material from which soil horizons form.
Soil Texture	The predominant size of the particles found in the soil and the percent of each that compose a soil.
Soil Structure	The arrangement of the particles in the soil. It provides spaces in the soil for oxygen. It is important to know that soil structure is dynamic (constantly changing) and can be destroyed by tillage, heavy equipment, or anything else that leads to compaction.
Soil Profile	The composition of different horizons in soil, from the surface vertically to where the land meets the rocks beneath.
Cation	A positively charged ion. Pronounced Cat-Ion.
Cation Exchange Capacity	The number of negative charge sites in a soil. This influences the soil's ability to hold cations and can be used as an index of the potential soil fertility.
Soil pH	Measurement of the acidity of the soil.