

WEPP – Soil Sampling Background

- I. Soil is made up of decomposed plant material plus ground up rocks.
The particles of the ground up rocks are different sizes – clay, silt, sand, gravel, . . .**

- II. Two broad soil categories**
 - A. Organic soil– almost all decomposed plants
 - B. Mineral soil– mostly sand, silt and clay, with some organic matter

- III. Organic Soil -- black or very dark brown, not gritty, very light (a bucket of organic soil weighs much less than a bucket of mineral soil)**

- IV. Mineral Soil – has a broad range of Soil Textures**

- V. Soil Texture is determined by the proportion of clay silt & sand particles**

- VI. See the Soil Texture Triangle**

- VII. How to determine Soil Texture by Feel . . . see the flowchart**

- VIII. Sample Soils – Organic Plus a Range of Mineral Soils**
 - A. Organic – very dark, not gritty, not sticky
 - B. Mineral #1 – dark, but not so dark as A, has lots of organic material in it; makes a weak ribbon, feels a little gritty and a little sticky, so it has sand and clay in it too . . . a loam soil toward the sandy clay type
 - C. Mineral #2 – not so dark as #1, so less organic material; makes a weak ribbon, still feels gritty and sticky, but less so than #1 . . . a loam soil toward the silty clay type
 - D. Mineral #3 – still has some organic matter; makes a strong ribbon; feels a little gritty and VERY sticky . . . a clay soil