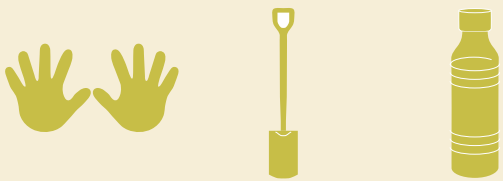




01 Texture Hand Test

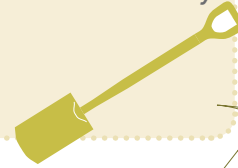
A soil's texture speaks a lot about the soil's ability to drain water and capture nutrients. The texture of soil varies on a continuum from coarse to fine. The size of the soil's mineral particles sand, silt, and clay, determine how coarse or fine the soil is. Generally loams are the most desirable garden soils. Don't worry. Almost any texture of soil can produce beautiful plants. Knowing the soil's texture will help you make better plant selections, ones that will succeed because they are chosen specifically in relationship to your garden's soil.

What You'll Need:



Step 1:

Dig a couple inches down into the soil layer. Moisten the soil, if it is not already moist.



Step 3:

Do the following tests.

Step 2:

Take about a cup of soil from the root zone, not the surface.

Test A - Feel Test

Rub some moist soil between your fingers.

- Sand feels gritty.
- Silt feels smooth.
- Clays feel sticky.

Test C - Ball Squeeze Test

Squeeze a moistened ball of soil out between your thumb and fingers.

- Sandy soils won't ribbon.
- Loam, silt, silty clay loam or clay loam soil ribbons less than 1 inch.
- Sandy clay loam, silty clay loam or clay loam ribbons 1 to 2 inches.
- Sandy clay, silty clay, or clay soil ribbons more than 2 inches.



Test B - Ribbon Test

Squeeze a moistened ball of soil in your hand.

- Coarse textures (sand or sandy loam) soils break with slight pressure.
- Sandy loams and silt loams stay together but change shape easily.
- Fine textured (clayey or clayey loam) soils resist breaking.

