

# SOIL FEATURES

This table gives estimates of several important soil features which are used in land use planning that involves engineering considerations. Soil features which are covered include bedrock depth and hardness, cemented pan depth and hardness, subsidence, potential frost action, and risk of corrosion for uncoated steel or for concrete.

Tables for soil features by soil map unit can be found in the soil survey manuscript, Customer Service Toolkit, and NASIS.

## **Restrictive Layer**

A restrictive layer is a nearly continuous layer that has one or more physical, chemical, or thermal properties that significantly impede the movement of water and air through the soil or that restrict roots or otherwise provide an unfavorable root environment. Examples are bedrock, cemented layers, dense layers, and frozen layers. The table indicates the hardness and thickness of the restrictive layer, both of which significantly affect the ease of excavation. Depth to top is the vertical distance from the soil surface to the upper boundary of the restrictive layer.

## **Subsidence**

Subsidence potential is the maximum possible loss of surface elevation from the drainage of wet soils having organic layers or semifluid mineral layers. Estimates of the depth of subsidence (in inches) that takes place soon after drainage (initial subsidence) and after oxidation (total subsidence) are given for soils that are likely to subside.

## **Potential Frost Action**

This is the likelihood of upward or lateral movement of soil by the formation of segregated ice lenses (frost heave) and the subsequent loss of soil strength upon

thawing. The following classes are used in regions where frost action is a potential problem: (1) Low -- soils are rarely susceptible to the formation of ice lenses, (2) Moderate -- soils are susceptible to the formation of ice lenses, resulting in frost heave and subsequent loss of soil strength, and (3) High -- soils are highly susceptible to the formation of ice lenses, resulting in frost heave and subsequent loss of soil strength.

## **Risk of Corrosion**

Risk of corrosion pertains to potential soil-induced electrochemical or chemical action that corrodes or weakens uncoated steel or concrete. The rate of corrosion of uncoated steel is related to such factors as soil moisture, particle-size distribution, acidity, and electrical conductivity of the soil. The rate of corrosion of concrete is based mainly on the sulfate and sodium content, texture, moisture content, and acidity of the soil. Special site examination and design may be needed if the combination of factors results in a severe hazard of corrosion. The steel or concrete in installations that intersect soil boundaries or soil layers is more susceptible to corrosion than the steel or concrete in installations that are entirely within one kind of soil or within one soil layer.

For uncoated steel, the risk of corrosion, expressed as low, moderate, or high, is based on soil drainage class, total acidity, electrical resistivity near field capacity, and electrical conductivity of the saturation extract.

For concrete, the risk of corrosion also is expressed as low, moderate, or high. It is based on soil texture, acidity, and amount of sulfates in the saturation extract.