

Section II

Explanation of Key Phrases Used In Soil Interpretations

Soil interpretations typically list the degree of limitation or suitability and factors affecting use of the soil for agricultural and nonagricultural purposes. The interpretations apply to the soils in their natural state (unless indicated otherwise) and not for areas that are altered by cut-or-fill operations.

Limitation or suitability terms used are as follows:

Slight (or good) - relatively free of limitations or limitations are easily overcome.

Moderate (or fair) - limitations need to be recognized, but can be overcome with good management or careful design.

Severe (or poor or very poor) - limitations are difficult or costly to overcome.

Explanation of key phrases used are as follows:

Factors affecting	Explanation
Area reclaim	Borrow areas hard to reclaim.
Cemented pan	Cemented pan too close to surface.
Complex slope	Slopes short and irregular.
Cutbanks cave	Wall of cuts not stable.
Deep to water	Deep to permanent water table during dry season.
Dense layer	A very firm layer difficult to dig.
Depth to rock	Bedrock too close to surface.
Droughty	Soil cannot hold enough water.
Dusty	Soil particles detach easily and cause dust.
Erodes easily	Water erodes soil easily.
Excess fines	Contains too much silt and clay.
Excess gypsum	Contains too much gypsum.
Excess humus	Contains too much organic matter.
Excess lime	Carbonates restrict plant growth.
Excess salt	Water-soluble salts may restrict plant growth.
Excess sodium	Contains too much exchangeable sodium.
Excess sulphur	Excessive amount of sulphur in the soil may cause extreme acidity.
Fast intake	Water infiltrates rapidly.
Favorable	Features of soil favorable.
Flooding	Soil temporarily floods by stream overflow, runoff or high tide.
Fragile	Soil that is easily damaged by use or disturbance.
Frost action	Freezing and thawing can damage structures.
Hard to pack	Difficult to compact.
Large stones	Rock fragments 10 inches or larger.
Low strength	Soil not strong enough to adequately support loads.
No water	Too deep to ground water.
Percs slowly	Water moves through the soil too slowly.

Factors affecting	Explanation
Piping	Water may form tunnels or pipelike cavities in the soil
Ponding	Standing water on soils in closed depressions.
Poor filter	Because of rapid permeability, the soil may not adequately filter effluent
Poor outlets	Difficult or expensive to install outlets for drainage.
Rooting depth	Soil is thin over layer that greatly restricts root growth.
Seepage	Water moves through soil or fractured bedrock too fast
Shrink-swell	Soil expands significantly on wetting and shrinks on drying.
Slippage	Soil mass susceptible to movement downslope, when loaded, excavated, or wet.
Slope	Slope is too great.
Slow intake	Water infiltration restricted.
Slow refill	Ponds fill slowly because of restricted soil permeability
Small stones	Contains many rock fragments less than 10 inches across
Soil blowing	Soil easily moved by wind.
Subsides	Settling of organic soils or of soil containing semifluid layers.
Thin layer	Inadequate thickness of suitable soil.
Too acid	Soil is so acid that growth of plants is restricted.
Too arid	Soil is too dry most of the time.
Too clayey	Soil slippery and sticky when wet and slow to dry.
Too sandy	Soil soft and loose; droughty and low in fertility.
Toxicity	Excessive amount of toxic substances, such as sodium or sulphur.
Unstable fill	Banks of fill likely to cave or slough.
Wetness	Soil wet during period of use.