Determining Soil Texture by the “Feel Method”

**Texture Classification**
- C = Coarse
- MC = Moderately Coarse
- M = Medium
- F = Fine

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**Start**

Place approximately one tablespoon of soil in palm. Add water a drop at a time and knead the soil to break down all aggregates. Soil is at the proper consistency when plastic and mobile, like moist putty.

Does soil remain in a ball when squeezed? **YES**

Is the soil to dry? **NO**

Is the soil too wet? **NO**

Add dry soil to soak up water.

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Place ball of soil between thumb and forefinger, gently pushing the soil with the thumb, working it upward into a ribbon. Form a ribbon of uniform thickness and width. Allow the ribbon to emerge and extend over the forefinger, breaking from its own weight.

Does the soil form a ribbon? **YES**

Does the soil make a weak ribbon less than 1” long before breaking? **NO**

Excessively wet a small pinch of soil in palm of hand and rub with forefinger.

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Sandy Loam MC **YES**

Does the soil feel very gritty? 0-20% **YES**

Silty Clay Loam F **YES**

Clay Loam F **YES**

Neither grittiness nor smoothness predominates.

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Loam M **YES**

Neither grittiness nor smoothness predominates.

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Silt or Silt/Loam M **YES**

Does the soil feel very smooth? 0-27% **YES**

Clay Loam **YES**

Neither grittiness nor smoothness predominates.

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Sandy Loam MC **YES**

Does the soil feel very gritty? 20-35% **YES**

Silty Clay Loam F **YES**

Neither grittiness nor smoothness predominates.

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Sandy Clay MC **YES**

Does the soil feel very gritty? 35-55% **YES**

Silty Clay **YES**

Neither grittiness nor smoothness predominates.

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Excessively wet a small pinch of soil in palm of hand and rub with forefinger.

Does the soil make a strong ribbon 2” or longer before breaking? **YES**

Excessively wet a small pinch of soil in palm of hand and rub with forefinger.

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Modified from: Thien, Steven J., Kansas state University, 1979 Jour. Agronomy education.
POOR RIBBON
LESS THAN 1 INCH

MEDIUM RIBBON
1 TO 2 INCHES LONG

GOOD RIBBON
MORE THAN 2 INCHES LONG