

Making a Cast

Place a small amount of soil in the palm of your hand and moisten. Soil is at the proper consistency when it is moldable like putty. Attempt to form a ball. Toss the cast from hand to hand to test for strength.

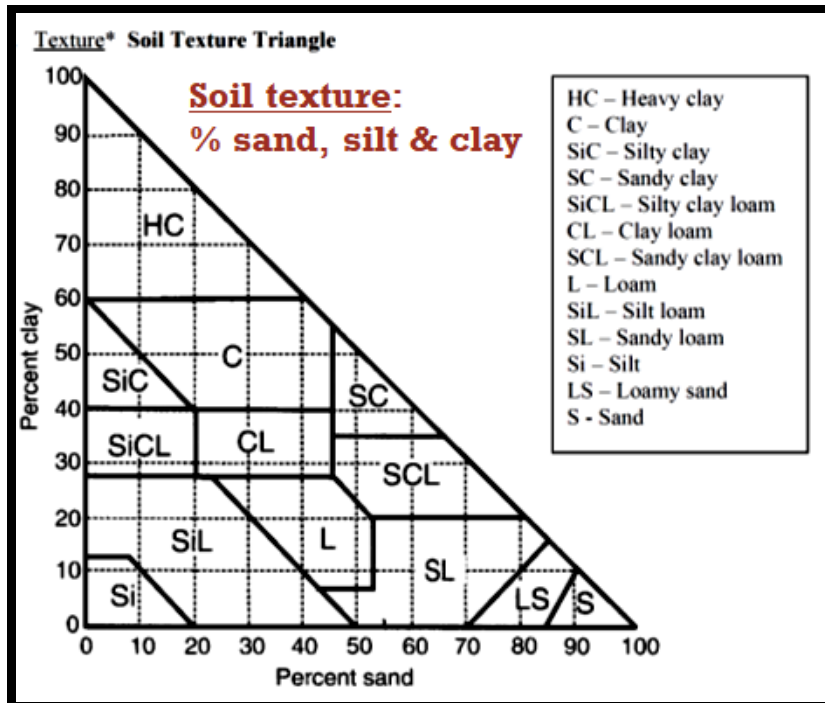
Making a Ribbon

Roll the moist soil into a rod shape. Squeeze the soil between the thumb and forefinger to form the thinnest ribbon possible. Form a ribbon of uniform thickness and width. Allow the ribbon to extend over the forefinger and bend or break under its own weight. If the soil is sticking to your fingers as you form the ribbon, it is too wet.



Feel Test

Rub the moist soil between the thumb and forefinger to feel for its coarseness or fineness. Sand has a grainy, gritty feel. Silt feels floury. Clay feels very smooth.



TEXTURE TEST

Does soil form cast? → **NO** → **SAND**

↓
YES

Does soil form strong cast allowing ready handling? → **NO** → Does soil form weak cast allowing careful handling? → **NO**

↓
YES

↓
YES

↓
LOAMY SAND

(weak cast that doesn't allow handling; grainy)

Does soil flake and feel very floury? → **NO**

↓
YES

↓
SANDY LOAM

(soil barely forms thick ribbon)

↓
SILT

Does soil form thin ribbon longer than 7.5 cm that doesn't break? → **YES** → **CLAY**

↓
NO

Does soil form thin ribbon that doesn't break? → **YES** ↓

Does soil feel smooth? → **YES**

↓
NO

↓
NO

↓
SILTY CLAY

↓
SANDY CLAY

Does soil form thin ribbon that breaks and barely supports weight? → **YES**

↓
NO

Does soil feel smooth and floury? → **NO**

↓
NO

↓
CLAY LOAM

↓
YES

↓
SILTY CLAY LOAM

Does soil form short, thick ribbon? → **YES** → **SANDY CLAY LOAM**

↓
NO

Does soil barely begin to ribbon? → **YES** → **LOAM**

↓
NO

→ Does soil flake rather than forming ribbon? → **YES** → **SILT LOAM**