



2A

SOIL TECH NOTES

Soil Assessment

WHY? Need to know what your soil is like NOW before you know what your soil NEEDS!

HOW?

- Examine top 12 to 24 inches.
- Use garden spade.
- Use soil probe.
- Observe when digging backhoe pit for FFA soil contest site, fixing tile line, replacing fence posts, etc.

WHAT?

- Evaluate Chemical, Physical, Biological soil properties present.
- Soil structure size and type – smaller structure units better.
- Plant rooting depth and “health” of the roots? – active roots to 3 feet is good, shallow roots in upper few inches only indicates a problem.
- Residue accumulating on the surface? - several years of residue still present indicates low biological activity, only one year residue means active microbes.
- Look for ants, bugs, worms, etc. – these macro critters need to be present for complete biological soil health!
- Dense layer at 7 – 10 inches? – could be caused by tillage!
- Roots of various sizes but all healthy – downward or sideways? – sideways roots indicate some sort of an restricting soil layer!

