Texture-by-Feel Flow Chart
For Identifying Soils

Start

Place a small amount of soil in palm. Add water slowly and knead soil to mix well. Soil should be moldable, like moist putty.

Does soil remain in a ball when squeezed?

NO

Sand

YES

Place a ball of soil between thumb and forefinger and squeeze it upward to form a ribbon. Let this ribbon of soil extend up above your fingers until it falls over and/or breaks under its own weight.

How long did the ribbon get before breaking?

2.5 cm or less

2.5 – 5 cm

5 cm or longer

Loamy Sand

Get a small pinch of soil really wet and rub with forefinger. How does it feel?

Mostly gritty?

Sandy Loam

Mostly smooth?

Silt Loam

Mostly smooth and gritty?

Loam

Equally smooth and gritty?

Yes

No

Mostly gritty?

Sandy Clay Loam

Mostly smooth?

Silty Clay Loam

Mostly smooth and gritty?

Clay Loam

Equally smooth and gritty?

Yes

No

Mostly gritty?

Sandy Clay

Mostly smooth?

Silty Clay

Mostly smooth and gritty?

Clay

Resource adapted from NCRS document by Blandy Education Team 2007