

HAVEN NURSERIES LTD

Crab Lane, Bobbington, Stourbridge. DY7 5DZ
TEL 01384 221543 email info @havennurseries.co.uk



Types of soil

Although no two soils are alike there are roughly six main soil types: 1.Clay 2.Sandy 3.Silty 4.Peaty 5.Chalky 6.Loamy. Soils are usually a combination of these ingredients in varying quantities.

Clay Soil. When clay soils are wet they are very sticky, lumpy and pliable but when they dry they form rock-hard clots. Clay soils are composed of very fine particles with few air spaces, thus they are hard to work and often drain poorly - they are also prone to water logging in spring. Blue or grey clays have poor aeration and must be loosened in order to support healthy growth. Red colour in clay soil indicates good aeration and a "loose" soil that drains well. As clay contains high nutrient levels plants grow well if drainage is adequate.

Sandy Soils. Sandy Soils have a gritty texture and are formed from weathered rocks such as limestone, quartz, granite, and shale. If sandy soil contains enough organic matter it is easy to cultivate, however it is prone to over-draining and summer dehydration, and in wet weather it can have problems retaining moisture and nutrients.

Silty Soil. Silty soil is considered to be among the most fertile of soils. Usually composed of minerals (predominantly quartz) and fine organic particles, it has more nutrients than sandy soil yet still offers good drainage. When dry it has rather a smooth texture and looks like dark sand. Its weak soil structure means that it is easy to work with when moist and it holds moisture well.

Peaty Soil Peaty soil contains more organic material than other soils because its acidity inhibits the process of decomposition. This type of soils contains fewer nutrients than many other soils and is prone to over-retaining water. Through good management and use of fertiliser and artificial drainage excellent plants can be grown.

Chalky Soil Chalky soils are alkaline, usually light brown in colour, and contain large quantities of stones of varying sizes. They dry out quickly in the summer and have a tendency to block trace elements such as iron and manganese so that they are unavailable to plants - this in turn causes poor growth and yellowing of leaves. Chalky soil is extremely poor quality and needs regular, substantial addition of fertilizers and other soil improvers.

Loamy Soil Considered to be the perfect soil, Loamy soils are a combination of roughly 40 % sand, 40% silt and 20% clay. Loamy soils can range from easily workable fertile soils full of organic matter, to densely packed sod. Characteristically they drain well, yet retain moisture and are nutrient rich, making them ideal for cultivation.