

Soil Layers

Soil is made up of distinct horizontal layers. If you could take an elevator ride through the earth's surface you would pass several distinct layers.

What are the layers of soil?

The **humus** is the topmost layer of soil. It contains quite a bit of living material, plants, decaying leaves, needles, moss, and more. This layer is thin and very dark in color.

The **topsoil** is the next layer down. It is made mostly of minerals, and most plant roots live here. This layer is also dark in color due to the amount of decaying plant and animal matter.

The **subsoil layer** is next. It is made of sand, silt and clay that have not been broken down all the way, so it usually has less organic material in it. It is also lighter in color.

The **parent material** is the next layer down. It is mostly rock that has been slightly weathered. Not many things live down here, except for the biggest tree roots.

The **bedrock** is the lowest layer of soil. It is a solid rock layer.

