

Types of soil

Sandy soils

- Warm up quickly in spring
- Are light and easy to work
- Are free draining - can dry out in dry spells
- Tend to be low in nutrients
- Can be worked at almost any time
- Need liming little and often

Silty soils

- Are derived from deposits from rivers, etc.
- Warm up more quickly than clay soils but more slowly than sandy soils in spring
- Retain water longer than sandy soil
- Can be difficult to drain but less prone to waterlogging than clay soils
- Tend to be fertile
- Less heavy than clay and less light than sand

Clay soils

- Warm up slowly in spring
- Are heavy and need well timed cultivation
- Lie wet and are prone to waterlogging
- Tend to be rich in nutrients
- Should not be worked when wet
- Need regular liming

Loamy soils

- Contain a mix of sand, silt and clay soil particles
- Warm up fairly early in spring
- Are easy to work
- Usually need draining
- Should not be worked when wet
- Tend to be rich in nutrients

Calcareous (chalky) soils

- Are derived from chalk and limestone rocks
- Contain calcium carbonate and flints
- Tend to be alkaline
- Are usually free draining
- May be low in some nutrients
- Do not usually need liming

Peaty soils

- Are dark in colour and so warm up quickly in spring
- Can hold on to water
- Can be easy to work
- Are derived from the build up of dead plants
- Contain a lot of organic matter
- Tend to be acid
- Are usually high in nitrogen