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Water & Soil, part 2

Judging soil water depletion

Water depletion per foot depth of soil for major textures by feel and appearance

Soil water depletion can be judged approximately by feel and appearance. The accompanying table illustrates four levels of soil wetness that can be estimated for each major soil texture group. The figures placed by each level are the approximate quantities of water expressed as rainfall inches needed to restore one foot depth of soil to field capacity. The total amount of water needed at any irrigation would be the total of these values determined for each foot throughout the depth of the root zone.

Coarse	Inches	Medium	Inches	Fine	Inches
Dry, loose, crumbles	1.0	Crumbly, powdery, barely maintains shape when squeezed	1.5	Hard, firm, baked, cracked, too stiff to work or ribbon	2.0
A fragile cast when squeezed	0.6	May form a weak cast but still crumbly	1.0	Pliable, forms a cast or ball, will ribbon but is crumbly. Slight finger stain	1.4
Color darkened. Forms a weak ball when squeezed. Slight finger stain	0.3	Color darkened, forms ball or cast. Works easily and smoothly, stains fingers, has slick feel	0.5	Color darkened. Forms a good ball. Ribbons easily and has slick feel. Leaves finger stain	0.7
Appears and feels moist. Forms cast or ball. Stains hand	0.0	Color dark, has smooth mellow feel. Forms ball and will ribbon when squeezed. Leaves wet outline on hand	0.0	Color darkened, appears moist, may feel sticky, ribbons easily, forms good ball and stains hand	0.0