



What are the main types of soil?

Sandy Soils

Warms up quickly in Spring

Are light and easy to work

Are free-draining

Can dry out in dry weather

Tend to be low in nutrients

Can be worked at almost any time

Need liming little and often

Silty Soils

Deposited by rivers and lakes

Warm up quicker than clay but slower than silt soils in Spring

Keep water longer than sandy soils

Difficult to drain, but less likely to waterlog than clay

Tend to be fertile

Clay Soils

Warm up slowly in Spring

Heavy soils needing well-timed cultivation

Lie wet and 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 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 Soils

Come from chalk and limestone rocks

Contain calcium carbonate and flints

Tend to be alkaline

Usually free-draining

May be low in some nutrients

Do not usually need liming

Peaty Soils

Dark in colour, so warm up quickly in Spring

Hold on to water well and can be easy to work

Come from the build up of dead rotted plants, so contain lots of organic matter

Tend to be acid

Usually high in Nitrogen



Also see the Testing Soils sheet

