

# Identifying Soil Texture by Feel

**Feel test** – Rub some moist soil between fingers.

- ▶ Sand feels gritty.
- ▶ Silt feels smooth.
- ▶ Clays feel sticky.

**Ball squeeze test** – Squeeze a moistened ball of soil in the hand.

- ▶ Coarse texture soils (sand or loamy sands) break with slight pressure.
- ▶ Medium texture soils (sandy loams and silt loams) stay together but change shape easily.
- ▶ Fine textured soils (clayey or clayey loam) resist breaking.

**Ribbon test** – Squeeze a moistened ball of soil out between thumb and fingers.

- ▶ Ribbons less than 1"
  - Feels gritty = coarse texture (sandy) soil
  - Not gritty feeling = medium texture soil high in silt
- ▶ Ribbons 1-2"
  - Feels gritty = medium texture soil
  - Not gritty feeling = fine texture soil
- ▶ Ribbons greater than 2" = fine texture (clayey) soil

Note: A soil with as little as 20% clay will behave as a clayey soil. A soil needs 45% to over 60% medium to coarse sand to behave as a sandy soil. In a soil with 20% clay and 80% sand, the soil will behave as a clayey soil.