

Nutrient holding capacity: **texture test.**

Soil's ability to hold nutrients and drain water depends on the soil's texture. Soil texture depends on the size of the particles in your soil. Soils dominated by sand (large particles; up to 2 millimeters) tend to drain quickly; whereas, soils with a higher proportion of clays (the tiniest particles; 2 micrometers or smaller) tend to drain slower.

Follow the instructions on the back of this page to determine your soil's texture.

Find other tests and check out our work on our website:

soilsafe.auckland.ac.nz

What kind of soil do I have?



Place soil in your palm; add water drops until it feels like moist putty. Squeeze your sample. Does it remain in a ball? Are you sure you added enough water?

If it still falls apart, you have *sand* (*onepū*). If it now remains in a ball, squeeze your sample between your thumb & forefinger. Does it form a ribbon?



If it doesn't, you have *loamy sand*. If it forms a ribbon, add more water; use your forefinger to rub the soil in your palm.

Is it very gritty?

- If your ribbon was less than 2.5 cm before breaking, it's *sandy loam*.
- If your ribbon was between 2.5–5 cm, you have *sandy clay loam*.
- If your ribbon was longer, you have *sandy clay* (*keretū*).



Is it very smooth?

- If your ribbon was less than 2.5 cm, you have *silt loam*.
- If your ribbon was between 2.5–5 cm, you have *silty clay loam*.
- If your ribbon was longer, you have *silty clay*.

Is your sample halfway in between?

- If your ribbon was less than 2.5 cm, you have *loam* (*onematua*).
- If your ribbon was between 2.5–5 cm, you have *clay loam*.
- If your ribbon was longer, you have *clay* (*keretū*).

