

It takes 1,000 years to make an inch of soil

Soil may be one of the most taken for granted substances on earth. But where would we be without it? The answer is simple; we wouldn't! Soil makes up the outermost layer of our planet. Without it, there would be no plants, which would mean no oxygen, and therefore, no life forms. All that comes from the soil is necessary for our existence. Therefore, it is important that we understand more about how it is formed and how long it takes to become the soil we walk on today.

The formation of soil is a complex process. It can take up to a thousand years to produce just a single inch. Weather breaks down the rocks, minerals and other materials that form soil. To put it all into perspective, think about some of the things that have happened during the time it took to form just one inch of soil

About 1000 years ago, kingdoms grew in Europe; the books of the ancient Greeks slowly began to find their way into Universities. This was the beginning of the Middle Ages.

Over the next 450 years new technologies were invented. Plowing with horses, together with wind and water powered mills provided more food. Improvements in glass, mining, metal working, clocks, cathedral building and ship building were also made. Gunpowder was introduced and guns began to be developed.

The 1500's brought the completion of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling. Juan Ponce de Leon discovered Florida in 1513 John Smith founded the first permanent English colony in North America at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607.

Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were born in the 1700's. In 1773 American colonists threw British tea into the Boston Harbor and three years later the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.

Lewis and Clark begin their expedition into the American Northwest in 1804. In 1865, slavery ended along with the U.S. Civil War. From 1871 - 1877 Stanley found Livingston in Central Africa; Congress founded the first national park – Yellowstone; Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone and Thomas Edison the phonograph.

The 1900's brought man's first flight from Orville Wright in 1903, the first Model "T" Ford in 1908, and Einstein's theory of relativity in 1915. World War I ended in 1918; women received the right to vote in 1920; and the dust bowl of 1934 led to the first conservation district in 1937. World War II ended in 1945 and by 1951 ten million homes had a television. The Beatles recorded their first songs in 1962 and President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon in 1969.

The 1970's brought the end of the Vietnam conflict, Endangered Species Act, the Watergate scandal and the death of Elvis Presley. The 80's found Prince Charles wed to Princess Di, the first woman in the Supreme Court, the space shuttle Challenger explosion and the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The Internet became more popular throughout the 90's and India and Pakistan began to test nuclear weapons. Our country was attacked by terrorists affiliated with Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization in 2001. An enormous tsunami

devastated Asia, killing 200,000 people. The 2008 Olympics saw Michael Phelps win a record 8 gold medals. And in 2008, history was made with the election of the first African-American president.

The soil that we walk on today has seen a lot of history. In fact, the name Adam is derived from the Hebrew word *adama*, meaning earth or soil. The Hebrew word *hava*, meaning living, was translated as Eve. Therefore, the names Adam and Eve signify *soil* and *life*. Does that help put it all into perspective?

Soil is a limited, non-renewable resource. We need to take care of it by not over using chemicals such as pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides. Think about how long the soil took to form next time you change the oil in your vehicle and take extra care not to get any on the ground. The little things you do today can save our soil for the next 1,000 years.

"How can I stand on the ground every day and not feel its power? How can I live my life stepping on this stuff and not wonder at it? " - *William Bryant Logan*