



## WORLD SOIL DAY

*“Essentially, all life depends upon the soil... There can be no life without soil and no soil without life; they have evolved together.”* - Dr. Charles. E. Kellogg, Soil Scientist and Chief of the USDA’s Bureau for Chemistry and Soils

### What is soil?

Soil is the loose surface material that covers most land. It consists of inorganic particles and organic matter. Soil provides the structural support to plants used in agriculture and is also their source of water and nutrients. Soils vary greatly in their chemical and physical properties. Processes such as leaching, weathering and microbial activity combine to make a whole range of different soil types. Each type has particular strengths and weaknesses for agricultural production.

### Why is soil important?

Healthy soils are essential for healthy plant growth, human nutrition, and water filtration. Healthy soil supports a landscape that is more resilient to the impacts of drought, flood, or fire. Soil helps to regulate the Earth’s climate and stores more carbon than all of the world’s forests combined. Healthy soils are fundamental to our survival.

### How to conserve and protect soil fertility

Ways we can conserve and protect our soil;

- **Plant trees to secure topsoil** - simply planting trees is a good conservation method as it secures topsoil and erosion is prevented;
- **Crop rotation** - this process prevents overgrowth of pathogens and a lack of fertility in the soil;
- **Water the soil** - this helps to not only nourish the soil but to protect it;
- **Add earthworms** - they increase the soil’s ability to absorb nutrients;
- **Fertilizers** - not all fertilizer products are effective for conservation therefore it is important to note its composition.

## **World Soil Day**

An international day to celebrate soil was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002. Under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand and within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership, FAO has supported the formal establishment of WSD as a global awareness raising platform. The FAO Conference unanimously endorsed World Soil Day in June 2013 and requested its official adoption at the 68th UN General Assembly. In December 2013 the UN General Assembly responded by designating 5 December 2014 as the first official World Soil Day.

World Soil Day (WSD) is a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources. It is celebrated annually on December 05. This year's theme is "**Halt soil salinization, boost soil productivity**" which aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, fighting soil salinization, increasing soil awareness, and encouraging societies to improve soil health.

Soil salinization and sodification are major soil degradation processes threatening ecosystems and are recognized as being among the most important problems at a global level for agricultural production, food security and sustainability in arid (receive little precipitation) and semi-arid regions (25 to 50 centimeters of rain per year).

***You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: "Our Earth, Our Environment", C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: eit.epaguyana@gmail.com. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and subscribe to our YouTube channel.***