

# Soil structure scorecard for topsoils in Tasmania

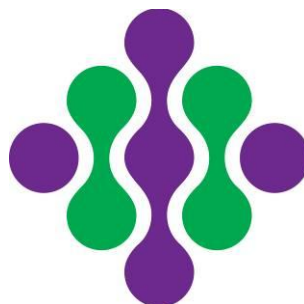
## Method

1. Use a spade to dig a hole approximately 300 mm square to the base of the topsoil.
2. Take a 50 mm wide vertical slice of topsoil from the edge of the hole.
3. Place soil on a clean surface, such as a fertiliser bag.
4. Use your hands to break the slice of soil apart, noting the force required and the resulting clods or aggregates.

## Helpful hints

- The scoring should be done quickly, rather than agonizing over subtle differences.
- Sample 3 or 4 sites in each paddock.
- It is better to do several quick scores in a paddock than to labour over one score.
- It helps to carry with you soils with different scores for comparison (eg. In an ice-cream container).
- Compare the soil in the paddock with soil from under the fenceline.
- You can put some soils in 'storage' for comparison in a year or two,  
to see if your soil structure has changed.

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## Soil structure scorecard

### For clay loam textured topsoils in Tasmania

#### **Score 1 – 2**

Large compact clods (50 – 100 mm) with few fine aggregates. Clods are angular or plate-like with smooth sides and no pores.



#### **Score 3 – 4**

Mainly firm large clods (20 – 50 mm) that are angular with smooth faces and no pores. Clods and overworked soil break into loose powdery soil.



#### **Score 5 – 6**

Few medium and large firm, rounded aggregates (5 – 30 mm) with mostly finer aggregates (< 2 mm) and some powdery unaggregated soil.



#### **Score 7 – 8**

Friable soil with many rounded aggregates (5 – 20 mm). Many fine rounded aggregates (< 2 mm) but little powdery unaggregated soil.



#### **Score 9 – 10**

Porous loose soil with many rounded, irregular shaped aggregates (2 – 10 mm). Large aggregates have many holes for good aeration and drainage. Little or no powdery unaggregated soil. Often has abundant very fine roots.

