

## **Rays Soil Minute:**

The soil in our gardens is our greatest asset. The way we treat it, nurture it or even abuse it will determine how well our gardening activities will reward us. To a point the soil is pretty forgiving-- however, if we care for it well the plants that we grow in it will respond accordingly and will be extremely productive and give us great rewards and great beauty that can be enjoyed by all.

As gardeners there is no greater pleasure than seeing healthy plants yielding many textures and vibrant colors as they grow through their life cycles. In addition there are those wonderful flavors and dense nutrition that those plants provide that are our food and contribute to our daily diet, health and well being.

Soil is made up of a mix of sand, silt and clay in various proportions that provide support for the growing plants and provide water and nutrients to feed them.

Plants can be grown without soil at all, provided that they are supported and fed with an artificial mix of nutrients as in the system called Hydroponics. Whether hydroponics really allows plants to reach their genetic potential and to provide dense nutrition can be questionable.

The other component in soil that is crucial to healthy plant growth and performance is the soil microbiology. With modern technology it is becoming more and more important that as gardeners that we understand this essential role that these organisms play in plant health, growth and yield. This carries through to animals and our health as humans. We will explore their essential role and how we can enhance this in future "Soil Minutes".

20230321 RSM1.odt