

# Activity: Testing Soil

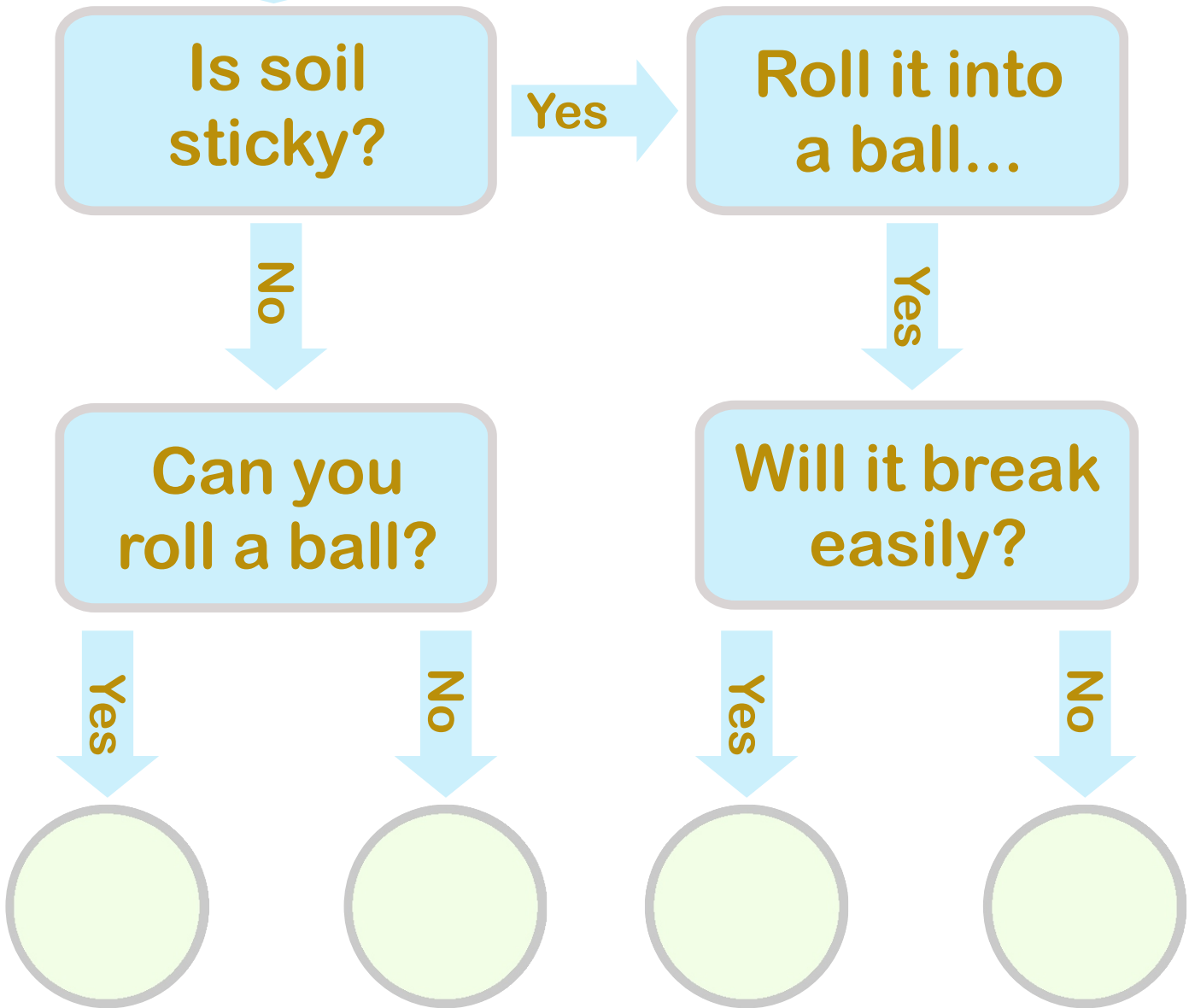
<http://www.soil-net.com>



**Start** Use moistened soil



Fill in the soil types



Now do the test. What type of soil do you have?

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## Activity: Testing Soil

<http://www.soil-net.com>



Key words for this lesson: **Sand, Silt, Clay, Loam**

This activity helps students to understand the components that make up soil.

Moisten the soil with a little water first. Provide students with a range of different soils.

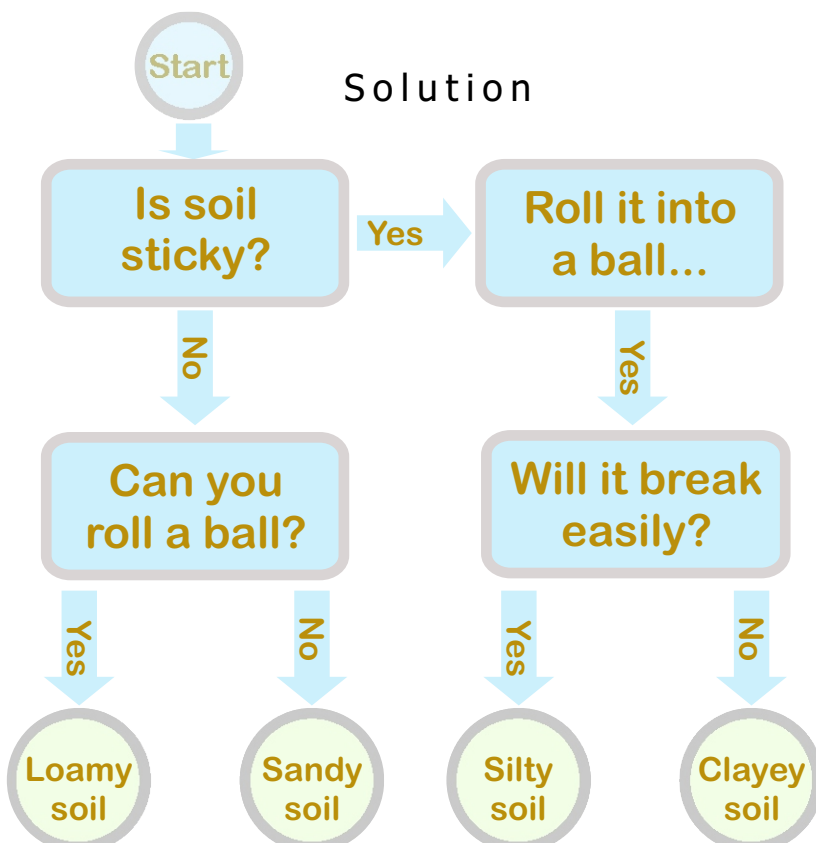
**Sandy soils:** form lightweight, free-draining soils; cannot hold onto nutrients

**Clayey soils:** hold water well; can become heavy and waterlogged when wet; can hold onto nutrients

**Silty soils:** hold water; can be hard to drain; can hold limited nutrients

Make sure that you follow your Education Authority Health and Safety Guidelines in doing this exercise. The soils to be hand textured should ideally be heat sterilised before the exercise.

Note that there are other soils too - see the Soil Types factsheet for more information on these.



First of all, have the students try guessing which soil type is which of the four and complete their sheets, (the students copy has the soil types omitted). This makes for a good class discussion. Once these are filled in, have the students try testing some soil.

Remember, it may be best to remove stones first from the soil. Alternatively, use dried soil samples and sieve - link to **Science 3a, (investigate) Separating Materials** - the separated soil can then be moistened enough to bind it.

Note the use of a sorting key is good practice - **Science 4a, Variation and Classification**.

