

# 4 Soil

## CultiAdvice

### Dear Green Thumb:

My tomatoes are dying. They get plenty of sun and water. What am I doing wrong? — Tom G.

### Dear Tom:

Check the **soil**. Tomato roots need the right amount of water and air. They don't do well in **sand** or **clay**. Both have the wrong **soil structure**. Sand particles are too loose to hold enough water. **Dense** clay prevents **aeration**. You need a **soil texture** in between those extremes. **Loam** with high **silt** is usually good.

The other issue is nutrients. A soil's **parent material** determines what nutrients are in it. You can improve the nutrients by adding **humus**.

### Get ready!

#### 1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1 What kind of soil is there in your country?
- 2 Why is good soil important?

### Reading

#### 2 Read the newspaper advice column. Then, mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- 1  Tomatoes grow well in clay.
- 2  Aeration does not occur in clay.
- 3  Humus adds nutrients to soil.

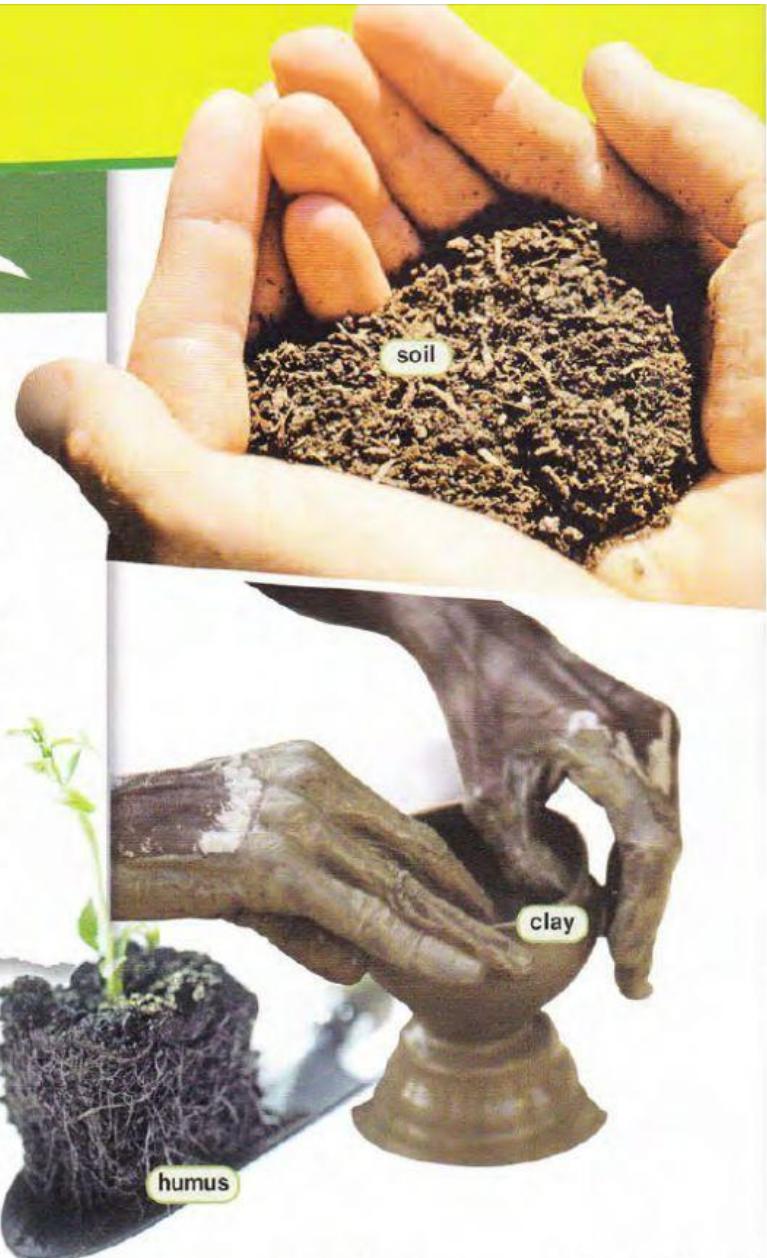
### Vocabulary

#### 3 Fill in the blanks with the correct words and phrases from the word bank.

#### Word BANK

aeration clay loam humus soil structures

- 1 Some \_\_\_\_\_ hold more water than others.
- 2 Crops don't grow well in pure \_\_\_\_\_ soil.
- 3 Use \_\_\_\_\_ to add nutrients to soil.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ provides roots with air.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ is a mix of three soil types.



#### 4 Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

- 1  soil
- 2  sand
- 3  silt
- 4  soil texture
- 5  parent material
- 6  dense

- A a material made of small pieces of rock and mineral
- B a material that is deposited by water
- C rock and minerals that eventually form soil
- D a layer of material that plants grow in
- E the size of particles in a soil
- F having a lot of material in a small space

5 Listen and read the newspaper advice column again. What do you need to take into consideration when planting tomatoes?

## Listening

6 Listen to a conversation between a customer and clerk in a plant supply store. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 What is the customer buying at the store?  
A soil      C houseplants  
B pots      D vegetables
- 2 Why does the clerk recommend Wonder Grow?  
A It contains no clay.  
B It has dense soil structure.  
C It supports vegetable growth.  
D It has good aeration and holds water.

7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

Clerk: Hi. Can I help you with anything?  
Customer: Yes. I need some 1 \_\_\_\_\_.  
Clerk: Is this for indoor or outdoor plants?  
Customer: It's for indoor plants.  
Clerk: What kinds of plants is it for? Houseplants? flowering plants? vegetables?  
Customer: I have some spider plants. They need to be put in 2 \_\_\_\_\_.  
Clerk: 3 \_\_\_\_\_, you should use Wonder Grow. It has 4 \_\_\_\_\_ and 5 \_\_\_\_\_ well, too.  
Customer: Okay, 6 \_\_\_\_\_. Thanks for your help.

## Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below based on Task 7. Then, switch roles.

### USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

*I need some ...*

*What kind of plants is it for?*

*You should use ...*

**Student A:** You work in a plant supply store. Talk to Student B about:

- type of plants
- soil types
- soil description

**Student B:** You need soil for your plants. Answer Student A's questions.

## Writing

9 Use the conversation from Task 8 and the newspaper advice column to fill out the product description.

**Product name:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ can be used for \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

It supports \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ growth.

Best of all, it has \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ better than any product.

