

Common Soil Horizon and Soil Horizon Suffixes

O horizon= Organic Surface Horizon- present in forested conditions, Canaan Valley wetlands, etc.

Oi- slightly decomposed organic materials, plant pieces still recognizable

Oe- moderately decomposed organic materials, plant pieces barely recognizable

Oa- highly decomposed organic materials, very small plant fibers present, a greasy feel

A horizon- Mineral Surface Horizon/Topsoil

Ap- altered by human activity; typically referenced as “plow layer”

E horizon- Mineral Subsurface Horizon- horizon where materials have been “removed” (eluviation)

B horizon- Mineral Subsoil Horizon- horizon where materials have been “collected” (illuviation)

Bg- dominantly gray in color due to saturation of water, causing anaerobic conditions

Bt- a noticeable clay % increase from the surface or subsurface horizon

Bw- weak color or structure within the B horizon (little color or clay % change from the above horizon)

Bx- contains fragipan characteristics

NOTE- more than 1 horizon suffix can be used (i.e. Btg, Btx)

C horizon- Mineral Substratum Horizon- very little horizon development

Cr- weathered or “soft” bedrock (can be excavated using mechanized equipment)

R horizon- Hard, resistant bedrock (not a soil layer)