

A SLICE OF SOIL

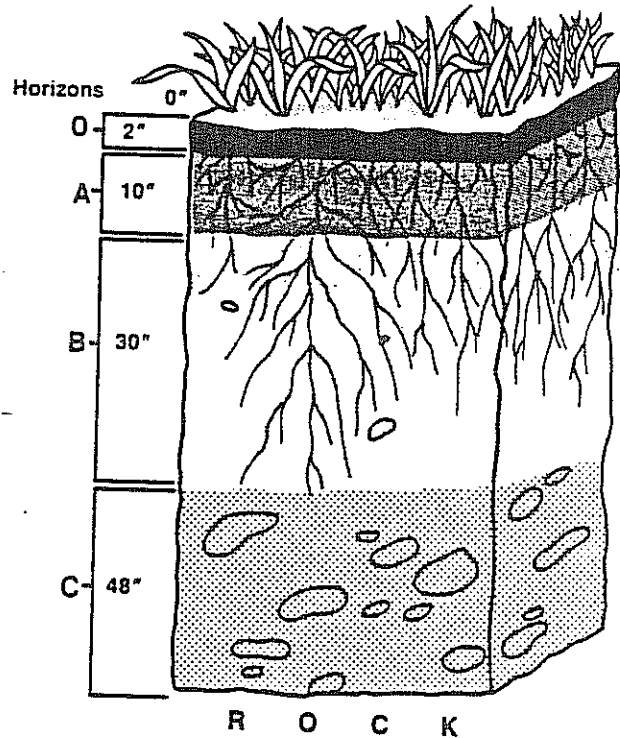
ORGANIC MATERIAL: Many dead and decaying plants and animals...loose and crumbly...lots of air spaces...black or dark brown

TOP SOIL: Contains various minerals *leached* (dissolved) from the decaying plants above... loose and crumbly...dark brown to yellow

SUBSOIL: Thicker and heavier than the materials in Horizons 0 and A...very poor soil for growing plants

ROCK AND ROCK PARTICLE: Useless for growing plants...color varies according to the kind of rock

A SLICE OF SOIL



If you cut a slice of soil out of a field that has never been farmed, it would look something like the diagram. Of course, the slices would look different from field to field.

Study the diagram to get the answers to the questions that follow.

1. How many layers, or horizons, of soil are shown? _____

2a. About how thick is the O horizon? _____

b. What is growing out of the O horizon? _____

3a. About how thick is the A horizon? _____

b. How far below the surface is the bottom of the A horizon? _____

4. How thick is the B horizon? _____

5. Which horizon, A or B, has the densest root system? _____

6. What are three or four ways that the C horizon is different from the other horizons?

7. According to the information to the left of the diagram, what two horizons are the best for growing plants?

8. Thought question: Why would a soil slice from a plowed field be entirely different from the slice shown in the diagram?
