

---

## Soil

### Soil

The topmost layer of soil in which plants grow is called soil. It is generally black or brown in color. It consists of organic matter, clay, sand, silt and rock particles. It also contains water and air. The soil is very important as it supports plants and other life forms.

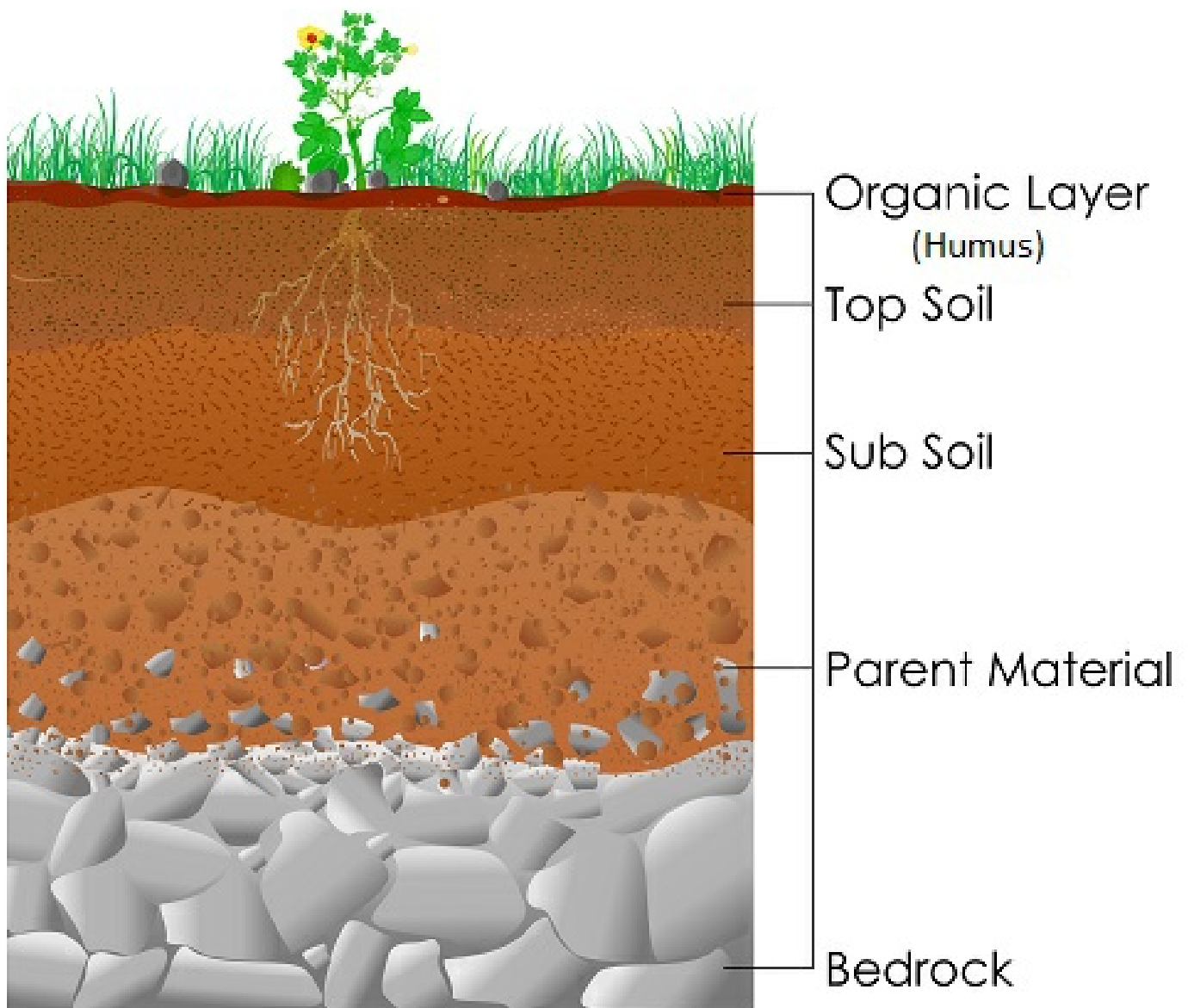
Soil takes several years to form. The **soil is formed by weathering of rocks.**

**Big rocks are broken into small pieces** over time with the effect of wind, sun and water. This process is called **weathering**.

Gradual wearing away or washing away of the top layer of soil is called **soil erosion**. Physical forces of **wind** and **water** are the primary causes of soil erosion. **Trees help in avoiding soil erosion** as their roots firmly hold the soil. **Deforestation** is largely responsible for soil erosion.

### Layers of soil

Following are the 5 layers of soil:



The **topmost** layer of soil is called **humus**. Humus is the **organic matter** which is made up of **dead plants and animals**. Humus is very **fertile** and helps plants to grow. Humus is dark brown or black in color.

**Topsoil** is **below humus**. It is very fertile and contains **microorganism**. It is **rich in minerals**.

The **subsoil** is below the **topsoil**. It is the **home of earthworms**.

**Small rocks** are **weathered rocks** below subsoil. Roots of very few trees reach up to this layer.

**Bedrock** is the **bed of newly formed rocks**. These rocks are big.