

## MEASURE AND MANAGE

### PRACTICAL SOIL MOISTURE INTERPRETATION CHART

<b>Amount of Readily Available Moisture Remaining For The Plant.</b>	<b>Sand (Gritty when moist, almost like beach sand)</b>	<b>Sandy Loam (Gritty when moist; dirties fingers; contains silt and clay)</b>	<b>Clay Loam (Sticky and plastic when moist)</b>	<b>Clay (Very sticky when moist behaves like modeling clay)</b>
Close to 0%. Little or no moisture available	Dry, loose, single-grained; flows through fingers	Dry, loose, flows through fingers	Dry clods that break down into powdery condition	Hard, baked, cracked surface. Hard clods difficult to break, sometimes has loose crumbs on surface
50% or less. Approaching time to irrigate	Still appears to be dry; will not form a ball with pressure	Still appears to be dry; will not form a ball	Somewhat crumbly, but will hold together with pressure	Somewhat pliable; will ball under pressure
50-75% Enough available moisture	Same as sand under 50%	Tends to ball under pressure but seldom will hold together	Forms a ball, somewhat plastic; will sometimes stick slightly with pressure	Forms a ball; will ribbon cut between thumb and forefinger
75% to field capacity. Plenty of available moisture	Tends to stick together slightly; sometimes forms a very weak ball under pressure	Forms a weak ball, breaks easily; will not become slick	Forms a ball and is very pliable; becomes slick readily if high clay	Easily ribbons out between fingers; feels slick
At field capacity. Soil will not hold any more water (after draining)	Upon squeezing no free water appears; but moisture is left on hand	Same as sand	Same as sand	Same a sand
Above field capacity. Unless water drains out, soil will be waterlogged.	Free water appears when soil is bounced in hand	Free water will be released with kneading	Can squeeze out free water	Puddles and free water form on surface

Adapted from R.W Harris and R.H. Coppock (eds.) Saving water in landscape irrigation, University of California Division of Agricultural Science Leaflet 2976 (1978).