

AERWORX'S STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO ASSESSING SOIL COMPACTION



STEP ONE

Drive a vertical spade down the three sides of a square of soil in your chosen area, being careful not to smear the surface of the sample. Take the spade to its full length.

Carefully remove the block of soil, by peeling it back along the uncut side without disrupting the surface, and place on a flat hard surface. Open the soil block like a book with minimal handling to expose the centre.

STEP TWO

Assess root structure/ distribution/density.

Ideally roots should penetrate all the way down through the soil quite deeply (in the top 15- 18cm) to enable the plants to access nutrients low down.



STEP THREE

Assess soil structure. A well-structured soil will be quite crumbly in texture, open, with round particles and will crack easily under gentle pressure. Any cracks in the soil should be vertical.

Poorly structured soil won't break up easily or may break up into larger block like aggregates. Horizontal cracks are a sign of hoof or tractor compaction.

STEP FOUR

Smell the soil. Good soil will smell earthy, while badly compacted topsoil will smell "off", like rotten eggs - the sign of unwanted anaerobic processes.

STEP FIVE

Assess soil colour - the soil should be a healthy red/brown colour with no grey or orange patches. Mottled grey colouring is indicative of repeated waterlogging.

STEP SIX

Infiltration rate. This is a very useful on farm test to determine how porous your soil is. Please call us if you would like to know to do this simple but telling test.

