



News release

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Get down and dirty on World Soil Day

Soil scientist Richard MacEwan says: “Our soils are among the most endangered on the planet. Yet they provide habitat for the most populous and diverse ecosystem on earth.”

The federal president of the Australian Society of Soil Scientists (ASSSI), Richard explains: “The rate of natural soil formation in Australia is very low in comparison to the rest of the world. It takes an estimated 1000 years to create between 0.01 - 0.3 tonnes of soil/ha – but only one windy day to strip all this away.”

A bad storm can rob up to 700 tonnes/ha^[1]. “That’s up to 700 millennia of precious topsoil lost in a day,” says Richard.

So ...what do soils do for us?

“They detox many of the contaminants and wastes we produce. They regulate greenhouse gases,” says Richard. “They’re part of the water cycle. And they grow food for us.

“Soils have changed history, with many civilisations rising and falling on the productivity of their land.

“If you eat food, it’s grown in soil. If you live in a house made of bricks, that’s clay, another type of soil. You drive on roads made of crushed rock; you wear clothes that grow or are processed from soil-based sources. Switch on your computer - even our power comes from the ground. Guess what? Dirt is the bedrock of everything.”

ENDS

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^[1] *Australian Soils and Landscapes - An illustrated Compendium 2004*