Follow the flow chart below to determine soil texture. Begin with a palm full of soil and slowly add water with a spray bottle as you work the soil with your hand. Knead the soil until it is completely moist but not saturated, like putty.

*Note: To practice making soil ribbons without the mess of using soil, use a modeling compound such as Play-Doh.*

Once the soil is at the proper moisture level, shape it into a ball, hold it between your thumb and forefinger, then gently squeeze. Does it stay in a ball?

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**Does the soil form a ribbon?**

- **YES** Begin making a soil ribbon*.
- **NO** Be sure the soil is not too wet or dry

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**Ribbon breaks at less than 1 inch.**

- **SANDY LOAM**
- **SILT LOAM**
- **LOAM**

**Ribbon breaks between 1 & 2 inches.**

- **SANDY CLAY LOAM**
- **Silty CLAY LOAM**

**Ribbon breaks at more than 2 inches.**

- **SANDY CLAY**
- **Silty CLAY**
- **CLAY**

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*Place the ball of soil between your thumb and the crook of your forefinger as you hold your hand in a fist shape with your thumb up. Gently push the soil forward, shearing it off the top of the ball, to make a ribbon of uniform thickness and length. Let the ribbon extend over your forefinger and break from its own weight. Repeat several times. The length of the broken pieces determines the ribbon length. It is easier to use the "clean" hand to make a ribbon rather than the one used to work the soil into a ball initially.*

Choose a column and stay in it.