

Andosols

(from Japanese *an*, meaning black, and *do*, meaning soil)



Andosols form from volcanic ash, pumice, cinder and related parent materials. Many Andosols have a thick, dark topsoil as a result of the fixing of organic substances by aluminium that is released from volcanic minerals upon weathering.

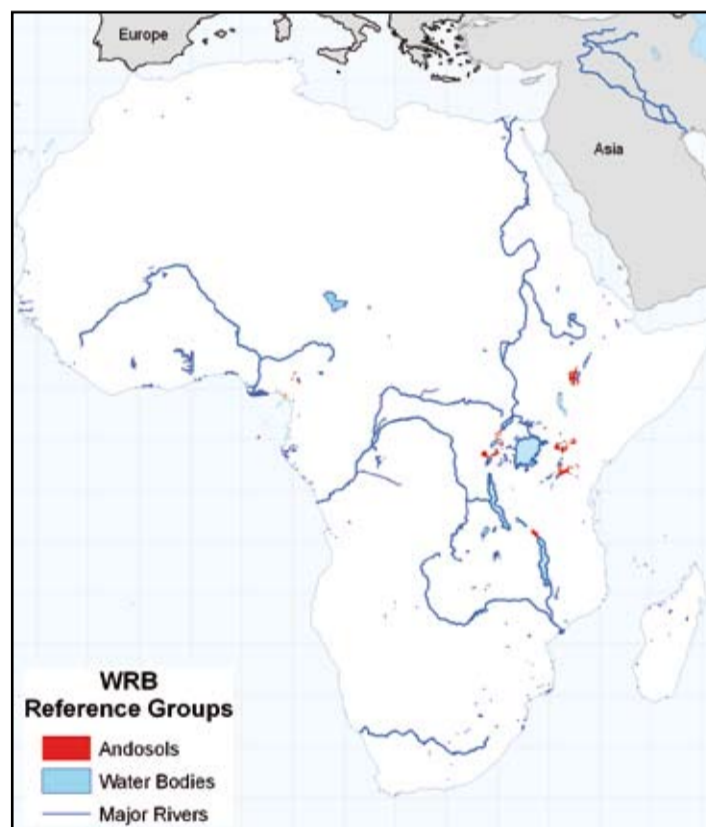
This profile from Kenya shows clear layering as a result of intermittent eruptions. Evidence of soil formation can be observed in the upper part of the soil (between 10 and 40 cm) where the accumulation of organic matter subsequent mixing has taken place. The difference in colour can be partly attributed to the weathering of iron-rich minerals (the reddish colours) and partly to the origin of the eruptive material.

Andosols are highly productive soils but suffer from phosphate fixation due to a high amount of iron in the soil.

April 2010



The snow-covered summit of Mount Kenya, an extinct volcano north of Nairobi.



Location of areas where Andosols are the dominant soil. Andosols cover around 0.2% of Africa.

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

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