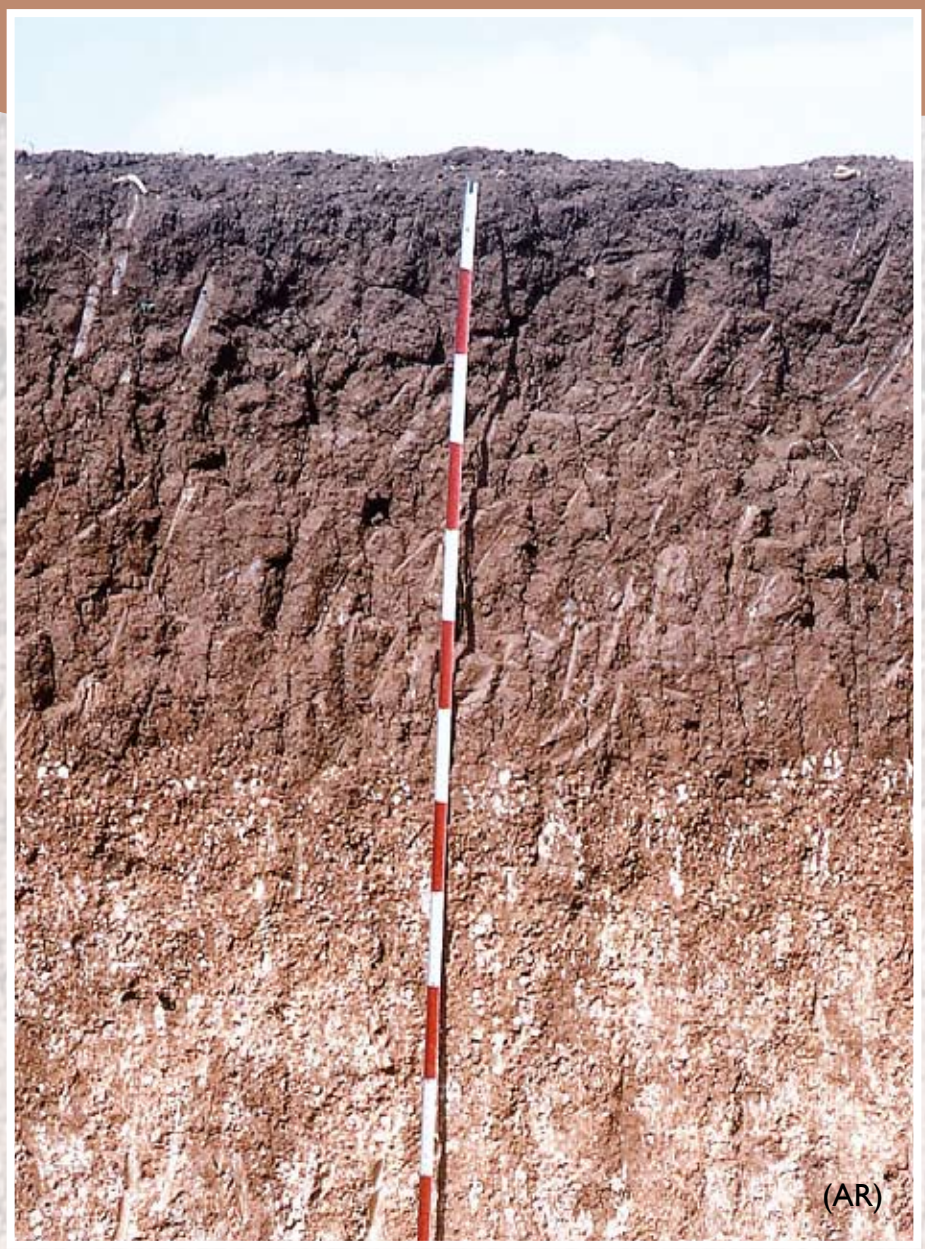
Kastanozems

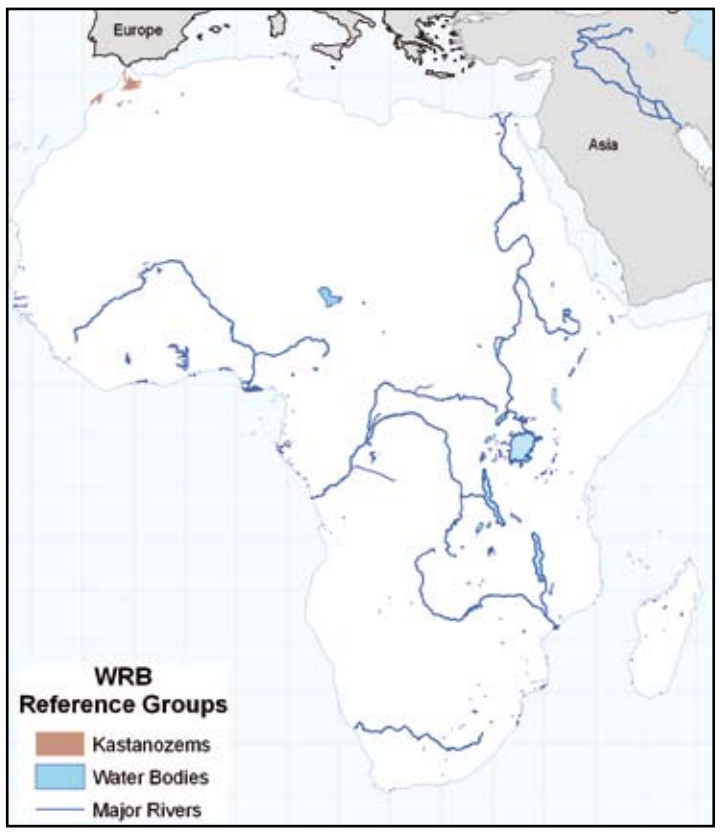
(from Latin *castaneo*, and Russian *kashtan*, meaning chestnut, and *zemlja*, for earth or land)



Soils having a deep, dark coloured surface layer with a significant accumulation of organic matter and high base saturation (mollic horizon), and accumulation of secondary calcium carbonate within 50 cm from the lower limit of the mollic horizon. Kastanozems grade into Calcisols, which are extensive in the drier parts of Africa, when the darker surface horizon becomes lighter coloured due to lower input of organic matter. In the above example from Morocco, the dark coloured surface horizon overlies a well-structured, chestnut brown subsoil; below 70 cm, calcium carbonate has accumulated mainly in the form of nodules. Kastanozems occur mainly in the dry grasslands of the world. In Africa, their occurrence is mainly limited to the Mediterranean region.

February 2010

This picture shows a Kastanozem area in Northern Morocco which is highly valued as agricultural land. The main source of the high organic matter content of Kastanozems is the abundant grass vegetation.



Location of areas where Kastanozems occur in Africa. Kastanozems cover around 0.1% of the continent and are of local importance only.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28