



Soil – our most precious resource?

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Chief Scientific Adviser
to the President of the European Commission***

The million Euro question: Which of these topics is the highest on the political agenda?

50:50



A: Data protection

B: Shale gas

C: Youth unemployment

D: Soil

15	●	€1 Million
14	●	€ 500000
13	●	€ 250000
12	●	€ 125000
11	●	€ 64000
10	●	€ 32000
9	●	€ 16000
8	●	€ 8000
7	●	€ 4000
6	●	€ 2000
5	●	€ 1000
4	●	€ 500
3	●	€ 300
2	●	€ 200
1	●	€ 100



Why is **SOIL** precious?



Soil underpins our planet's life support systems

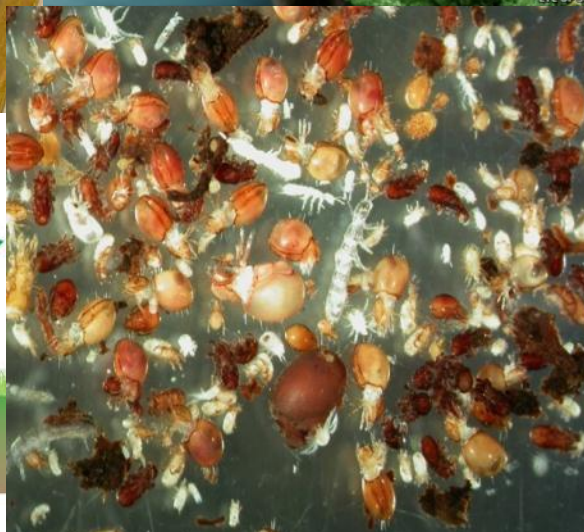




Soil provides ecosystem services

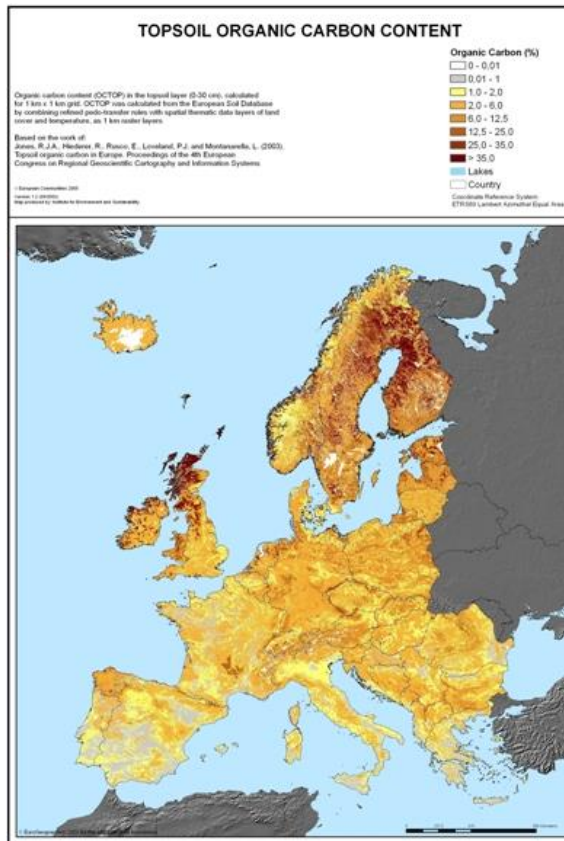


fordhamsustainability.wordpress.com





Soil plays an important role in the global climate system



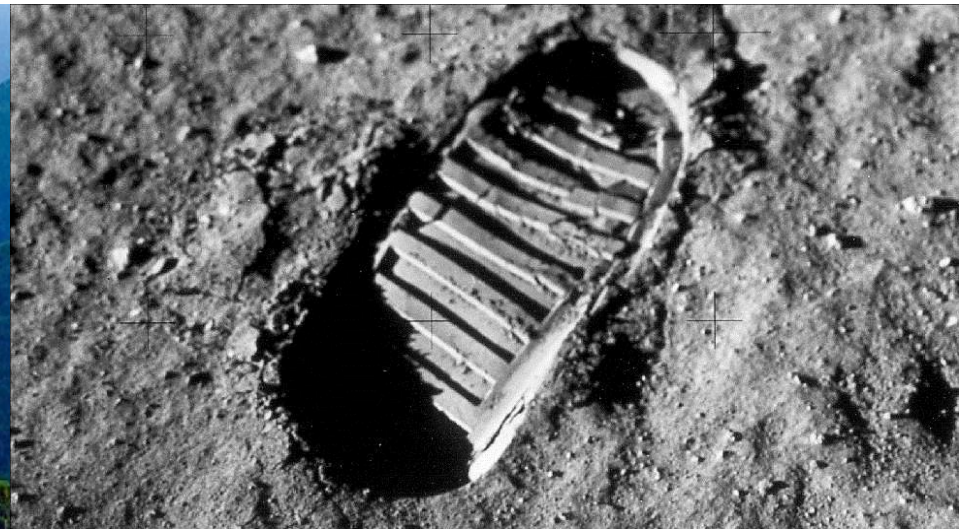


Soil is part of our natural heritage – to protect it is an ethical obligation





Soil is also cultural heritage!



An orange excavator is shown in the process of digging a deep, rectangular pit into a grassy field. The excavator's arm and bucket are visible, positioned at the edge of the pit. To the left of the pit, there is a large, conical pile of brown soil. In the background, a person wearing a dark shirt and a cap stands near the excavator. Further back, there is a white plastic sheeting covering a section of the ground, and a metal grate or fence line is visible. The scene is set in a grassy area with some trees in the distance.

**Soil is precious because
it builds up over millennia...**

...but is destroyed in seconds!



Soil impacts on many EU policies (beyond the EU Soil Thematic Strategy) and *vice versa*

- **Common Agricultural Policy**
- **Nitrates Directive**
- **Water Framework Directive (WFD)**
- **Blueprint to safeguard Europe's Water Resources**
- **Habitats Directive**
- **Biodiversity Strategy 2020**
- **Forestry Strategy**
- **EU Climate Change Policy**
- **Biofuels Directive**
- **Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources**
- **European Spatial Development Perspective**
- **Environmental Impact Assessment Directive**
- **Urban Waste Water Directive**
- **Waste Framework Directive**



**If SOIL is so important,
why don't we talk
about it more?**



Most people live in urban environments





**We usually don't see soil,
even if it is in front of our eyes**





Soil doesn't hit the media, unless in emergencies





Soil is dirty, but not sexy





**We have to find better ways
to talk about the value of soil**



The face of innovative soil research



Prof Lorna Dawson,
James Hutton Institute:
Soil forensics



Starting early is important





Tea bag index

<http://www.decolab.org/tbi/>





Make it easy to understand

Man on the Moon
French Revolution

Columbus arrives in America

Battle of Hastings
Charlemagne crowned

Fall of the Roman Empire

BC/AD



**Top soil
formed
in the last
2000 years**



Why does it concern me?





Let's raise awareness for soils!



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