

Soil is Sexy!  
or  
Let's Get Dirty!

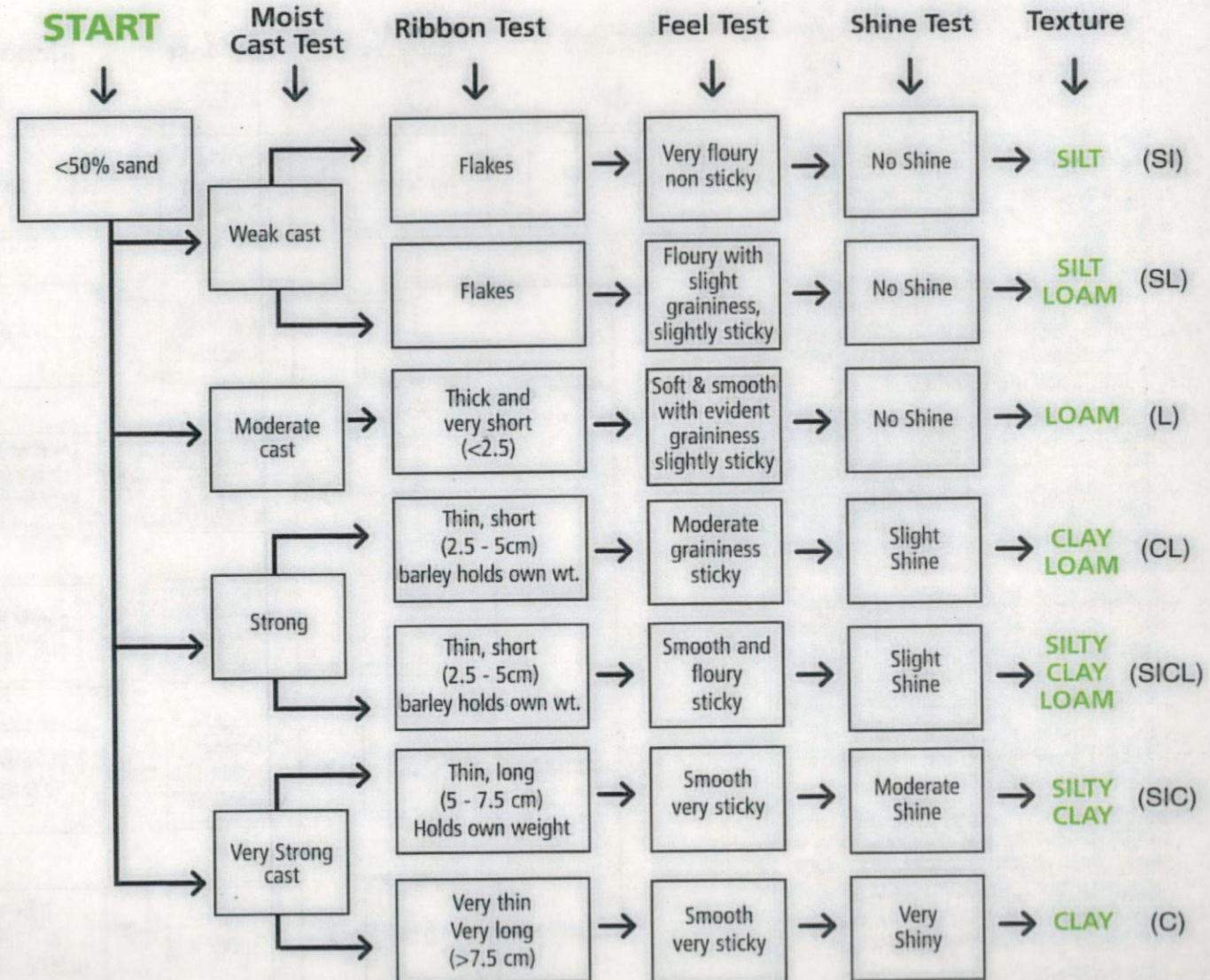


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# Determining Soil Texture - Hand Method; Sand Content Less than 50%

## HOW TO USE THE CHART

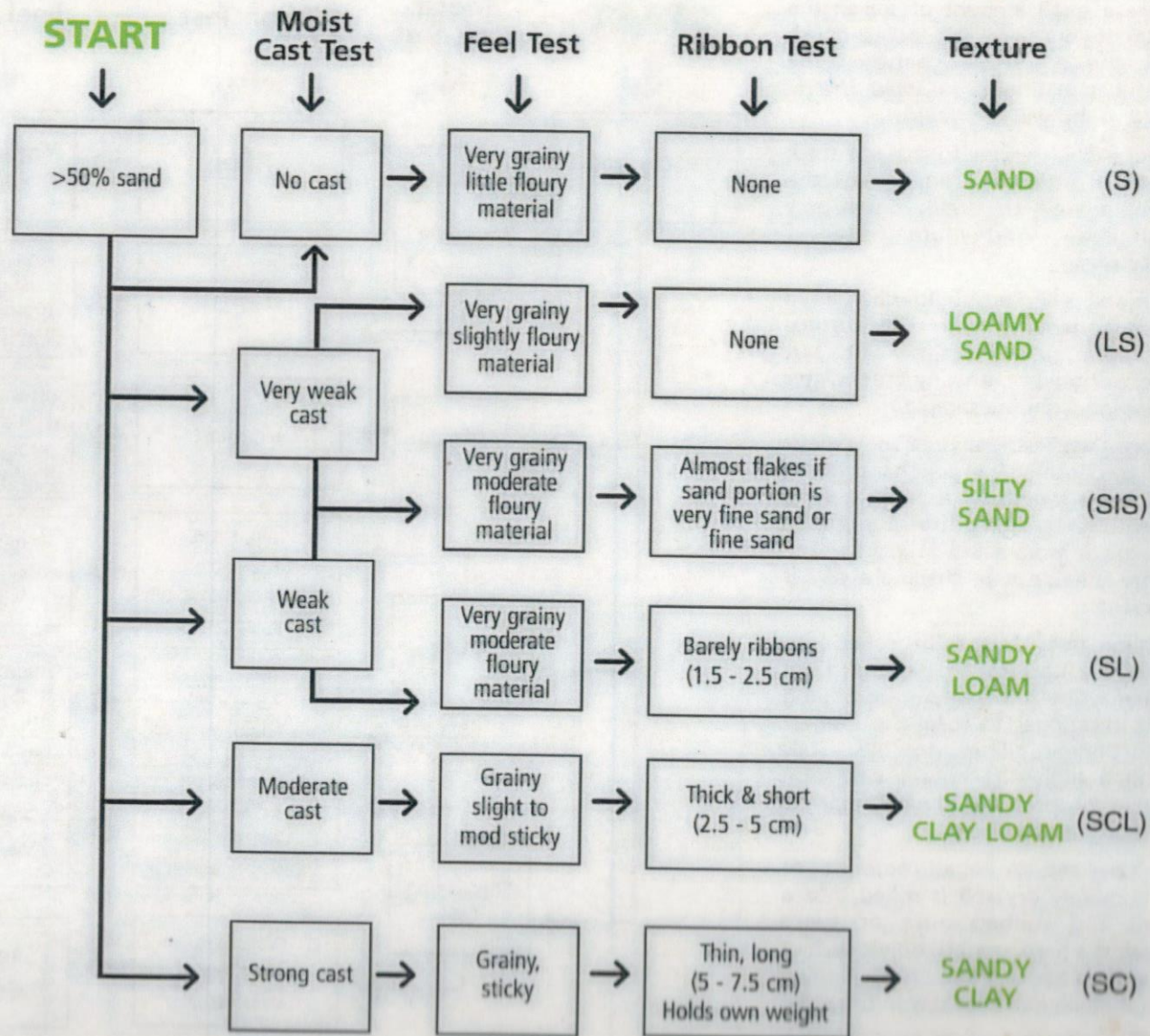
- Place a small amount of soil in the palm of your hand (2-3 tablespoons). Rub the dry sample between the thumb and fingers to assess the % sand. Sand will feel grainy.
- Add enough water to make a thick paste, a little at a time. Mix the sample well to break down any granules. Add more water if necessary.
- The soil sample should now be a homogeneous mass. The surface should appear evenly moist, but there shouldn't be any free water dripping from the sample.
- Moist Cast Test:** Compress some moist soil by clenching it in your hand. If the soil holds together (i.e. forms a cast), then test the strength of the cast by tossing it from hand to hand. The more durable it is, the more clay is present.
- Ribbon Test:** Moist soil is rolled into into a cigarette shape and then squeezed out between the thumb and forefinger to form the longest and thinnest ribbon possible. Soils with a high silt content will form flakes or peel-like thumb imprints rather than a ribbon.
- Shine Test:** A small amount of moderately dry soil is rolled into a ball and rubbed once or twice against a hard, smooth object such as a knife blade or thumb nail. A shine on the ball indicates clay in the soil.
- Follow the flow chart to determine the textural class.



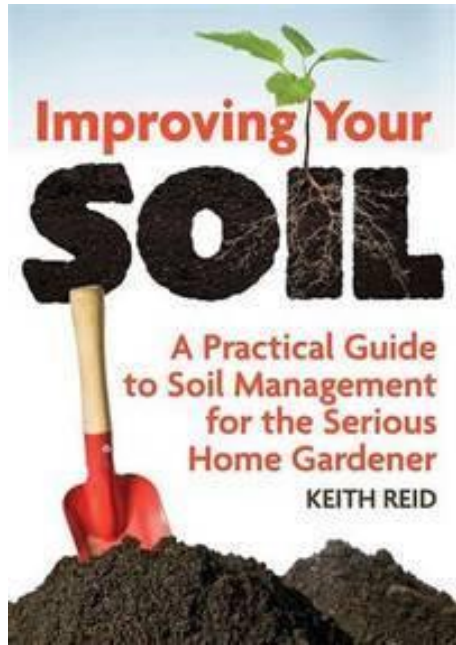
# Determining Soil Texture - Hand Method; Sand Content Greater than 50%

## HOW TO USE THE CHART

- Place a small amount of soil in the palm of your hand (2-3 tablespoons). Rub the dry sample between the thumb and fingers to assess the % sand. Sand will feel grainy.
- Add enough water to make a thick paste, a little at a time. Mix the sample well to break down any granules. Add more water if necessary.
- The soil sample should now be a homogeneous mass. The surface should appear evenly moist, but there shouldn't be any free water dripping from the sample.
- Moist Cast Test:** Compress some moist soil by clenching it in your hand. If the soil holds together (i.e. forms a cast), then test the strength of the cast by tossing it from hand to hand. The more durable it is, the more clay is present.
- Ribbon Test:** Moist soil is rolled into into a cigarette shape and then squeezed out between the thumb and forefinger to form the longest and thinnest ribbon possible. Soils with a high silt content will form flakes or peel-like thumb imprints rather than a ribbon.
- Shine Test:** A small amount of moderately dry soil is rolled into a ball and rubbed once or twice against a hard, smooth object such as a knife blade or thumb nail. A shine on the ball indicates clay in the soil.
- Follow the flow chart to determine the textural class.



# Some Recommended Resources:



[http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/resource/soil\\_labs.htm](http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/resource/soil_labs.htm)



<https://www.soilfoodweb.com/>



Ministry of  
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Rural Affairs



<https://pecmastergardeners.ca/jumping-worms/>



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