DR. DIRT'S SOIL TESTS ANYONE CAN DO AT HOME · TEST 2 OF 11

The Ribbon Test

Feel your soil: is it gritty, silky or sticky?



Time: 5 minutes | Kids and grown-ups together

You will need

- ☐ A small handful of soil
- ☐ A little water
- ☐ A ruler

Try it

1. Take a lump of soil the size of a ping-pong ball and pick out any stones.
2. Add water a few drops at a time, squeezing, until it feels like soft putty.
3. Rub a pinch between your fingers. **Gritty** means sand, **silky** (like flour) means silt, **sticky** means clay.
4. Squeeze the ball between your thumb and finger, pushing it up into a flat ribbon.
5. Keep pushing until the ribbon breaks off. Measure how long it got.

What it means

No ribbon, falls apart
Sandy soil.

Under 1 inch (2.5 cm)
A loam: a good mix.

1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm)
A clay loam.

Over 2 inches (5 cm)
Clay.

> **Try both:** Do the Jar Test too. Your fingers and the jar should tell the same story.

Wonder: *Which word fits your soil best: gritty, silky or sticky?*

My result