A PROPOSED DESCRIPTIVE SYMBOLISM FOR SOIL HORIZONS

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The article by Sokolovsky on nomenclature for horizons in soils has suggested the publication of a similar system possibly even more descriptive which has been used by the author for brief personal notes and classroom work.

From observations made at the Second International Congress of Soil Science in Russia in 1930, it seems that Dr. Sokolovsky is correct in his conclusion that there is no longer universal agreement as to the meaning or application of the symbols A, B, C, and D as applied to soil horizons. The original designation of A = surface or true soil; B = transitional soil; and C = subsoil, has been discarded, since it is now recognized that more than three horizons may be true soil in the sense that they owe their character to their present environment. The later distinction, as used by Glinka and by the American Soil Survey Association of A = eluvial; B = illuvial; and C = subsoil, is also open to criticism, especially when applied to the soils of the arid and semi-arid region where the surface horizons are often zones of accumulation. Also, as suggested by Sokolovsky and by Nikiforoff, a horizon may be eluvial with respect to one material and illuvial with respect to another. Besides, this distinction is based on an assumed origin of the horizon which might prove to be incorrect. It would seem better for the designation of the horizon to be based on observable properties of the horizon itself rather than on deductions therefrom.

Dr. Sokolovsky proposes the following designations:

- H = humus horizon—formerly A
- E = eluvial horizon—formerly A of podzol

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