Proposed New Suborders

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Several years ago, I gave an examination in which the answers were to be names of suborders in *Soil Taxonomy*, the U.S. soil classification system. Enterprising students who did not know the answers invented names. This approach was perfectly logical because an incorrect answer resulted in the loss of no more points than no answer, and the wrong answer might just slip past the instructor if he happened to be distracted by a basketball game on TV, or the cat jumped up on the desk, or he was becoming a bit sleepy. In other words, it was worth a try.

Although a few invented names may have slipped by (and the students are still proud of them), I did manage to catch most of the fabricated answers. I even thought that I could do as well as the students in making up suborder names. Here are a few for your consideration.

Alfalf—Soils with a sequence of two argillic horizons, both with high base saturation (bisequal soils with A-E-Bt-E'-Bt' horizon sequences). These soils are especially well suited for growing lucerne.

Ferment—Iron-rich, weakly developed soils. They grow good wine grapes.

Inept—A name proposed for certain weakly developed soils. This name was not approved because the soil scientist making the proposal was poorly qualified.

Leftist—Organic soils on the west side of the bog. They are reported to be developing in some South American countries.

Occult—Soils with argillic horizons with low base saturation and many concretions that are black on the inside and brown on the outside, that is, Mn occluded by Fe. These soils will require much research because their genesis is very mysterious.

Pervert—Swelling soils that are difficult to manage (pervasive Vertisols). This name should be carefully considered before it is adopted; it might be preferable not to use the name, like some letter combinations are forbidden on car license plates.

Placid—Soils in desert climates that have thin, cemented, Fe-rich bands. The Fe pan is so hard that the soils are not easily disturbed.

Poland—Soil formed in volcanic ash in central Europe.

Rightist—Organic soils on the east side of the bog; reported to be developing in some European countries.

Tumult—(*L. tumeo*, to swell, plus *ult* from Ultisol) Highly weathered soils with horizons of clay accumulation that undergo shrinking and swelling. It is reported that Washington, DC is built on these soils. Other definitions of *tumult* are "commotion of a multitude with confused cries, etc.; din, uproar."

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