The Variability of Soil Properties in Relation to Stage of Profile Development

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Throughout the ages, man has ardently concerned himself with the grouping of objects and the classification of them into natural or arbitrarily defined categories. A caution regarding the limitations of classification was expressed by Marbut (8) when he wrote "... it should be recognized that a classification of a group of things does not in itself increase our knowledge of those things. It is fundamentally an arrangement to facilitate the use of knowledge. The discovery of the characteristics of the bodies classified and the determination of their relationships, significance, and relative importance constitute the contribution to human knowledge, rather than the arrangement." Although the foregoing statement is essentially true, it would be rather discouraging to admit that the time and effort spent in the arrangement and rearrangement of systems classification of soils during the past 20 or 30 years has added nothing new to our general knowledge. Our present concept regarding the genetic relationships of soils, it is believed, has been gradually formulated as a result of continuous effort toward an ultimate arrangement of soil profiles into significant categories.

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