Is Pedology Soil Science?

by
Chas. F. Shaw
Professor of Soil Technology
University of California

The term "Pedology" is being used by some Europeans and Americans as a designation for soil science, and one Russian journal publishing articles dealing with soil problems has 'Pedology' as its title, as given in English. However, a search of the dictionaries and encyclopaedias of the English language has disclosed a very different meaning.

Webster's New International Dictionary gives the following:

"Pedo - latin - irregular combining form meaning foot.
Pedo - paedo - greek - combining form - boy, child.
Pedology - (pedo * logy)
1 - Medical - Pediatrics
2 - Child study."

Pediatrics is defined as:
"That branch of medical science which treats of the hygiene and diseases of children."

Only one term with a "soil" meaning was found:

"Pedograph (Greek - pedon - ground) an instrument carried by a pedestrian for automatically making a topographic record of ground covered during a journey."

The New Standard Dictionary gives essentially the same meaning to the words, and ascribes them to the same roots. Pedology is defined "(1) same as pediatrics. (2) The study of children". Pedomorphic is "characteristics of youth". Pedometer is ascribed to the latin root pes, a foot, and is defined as:

"An instrument that measures distances travelled, by recording the number of steps taken by the traveller on whose person it is carried."