SOME OF THE MAJOR SOIL PROBLEMS IN GEORGIA

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The purpose of this paper is to present some of the major soil problems which confront a field man in Soil Survey in Georgia. It is understood that, "any fool can ask questions" - but in spite of this criticism it is believed that a presentation of this problem will serve to focus greater attention upon them, especially by field men working in the state, and by their observation, aid in their solution. It is desired to indicate the character of the problems which occur throughout the state, as well as the particular problems which occur in the different geographic and soil divisions of the state. Although certain soil problems are common throughout the state, each geographic division also has problems peculiar to itself.

The soil problems in Georgia and in the other southeastern states are quite different from those in most other sections of the country, due to the fact that the soils themselves differ because of different soil forming factors. That these soils are different has not been recognized by many people who are unfamiliar with the state, with the result that it is quite common to hear or read a condemnation of the soils when judged by the standards by which northern or mid-western soils are judged. Likewise for the soil problems, remedies have been offered which are equally erroneous, due to this misconception of the nature of the soils. Misunderstanding of the soils has often led to rather serious trouble for newcomers into the state, unfortunately, sometimes accompanied by financial loss. Sometimes the red soils have been rejected because they are red instead of dark colored, whereas, some of the most productive soils in the state are red. At the same time it is quite easy to sell the St. John and Leon soils to strangers because of their high content of organic matter and smooth topography, even though they have an impervious hardpan rendering them of practically no agricultural value.

Dr. Marbut, in his lectures and elsewhere, has shown how the soil forming processes vary in different sections of the country. Throughout most of Georgia he has shown that these processes are lateritic in nature, although the soils are not true laterite.