REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREST AND ORGANIC SOILS

American Soil Survey Association

The Committee on Forest Soils, in addition to the subjects just presented on this program, wishes to submit a few phases of our field for your special consideration.

The subject of nomenclature and classification of the humus layers of forest soils, which was given some consideration at our last meeting, is still in a more or less formative stage. Material progress has been made. The designation of Litter, "f" and "H" horizons to indicate something more explicit than the A₀ horizon, is, we believe, becoming quite general in American literature on forest soils. We wish further to call your attention to the proposal of Romell and Heiberg, in Ecology (12:567-608). In brief, they have classified the humus-rich forest soil layers into two main groups:

A. Mull: A porous more or less friable humus layer of crumby or granular structure, with diffuse lower boundary, not matted or only slightly so.

B. Duff: A humus layer of unincorporated humus, strongly matted or compacted, or both, distinctly delimited from the mineral soil, unless the latter has been blackened by the washing in of organic matter.

They have further subdivided the mull group into:

1. Crumb mull - a coarse grained mull, inhabited by large earthworms, usually in large numbers. Content of organic matter not over 30 per cent, usually from 20 to 10 per cent or lower. Litter of loose leaves, or at times practically none because of rapid decomposition.

2. Grain mull - differs from crumb mull by its finer granular structure and the absence of large earthworms.

3. Twin mull - a complex type of humus layer, consisting of one upper stratum with the character of detritus mull or root duff underlain by grain or crumb mull.

4. Detritus mull - a fine granular mull, usually containing over 50 per cent of organic matter, looking like black sawdust.

Romell and Heiberg also recognize several types of "Duff."