

Competition Cosmos

World Soil Day

Soil is made up of minerals, organic matter and air in different proportions. It is important for life as it provides the medium for the growth of a plant, habitat for several insects and other organisms. It also acts as a filtration system for surface water and in the maintenance of atmospheric gases.

It is the source of four essential 'living' factors including food, clothes, shelter, and medicine. Therefore, conservation of soil is necessary. So, to raise awareness about soil loss, World Soil Day is celebrated on 5 December.

In 2002, the International Union of Soil Sciences recommended to celebrate World Soil Day annually on 5 December. Also, FAO supported the formal establishment of World Soil Day as a global awareness-raising platform under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand and within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership.

The conference of FAO was unanimously endorsed World Soil Day in June 2013 and requested its official adoption at the 68th UN General Assembly. In December 2013, UN General Assembly at the 68th session declared 5 December as World Soil Day. The first World Soil Day was celebrated on 5 December, 2014.



World
Soil Day

Soil conservation is the method to preserve soil. There are several reasons for the loss in soil fertility including over-use, erosion, salinisation and chemical contamination.

Soil erosion is when top soil is removed which is important for nutrients, micro-organisms that are necessary for plant growth and its shine. Let us tell you that soil conservation is one such step that protects the soil from being washed away. There are various ways to conserve the soil.

Why is 5 December chosen as World Soil Day?

Because this date corresponds the birthday of the late H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King of Thailand. He was one of the main proponents of this initiative.

World Soil Day 2019. Theme

The theme of World Soil Day 2019 is **“Stop Soil Erosion, Save our Future”**. The theme focuses on the increasing challenges in soil management and raises the profile of healthy soil by encouraging organisations, governments, communities, and individuals around the world to work towards improving the soil health and its conservation.

Techniques and methods to conserve soil are as follows.

- **Contour Ploughing.** Instead of planting the crop, contour ploughing is done to get the desired farmland. It is done for farmland on slopes to prevent run off improve crop yields. Or to minimise the soil erosion, ploughing is done along the contours of the land.
- **Terrace farming.** It is a method of carving multiple, flat levelled areas into hills. It is done to prevent run off and hold the soil nutrients in the beds.
- **Windbreaks.** To prevent wind erosion, in this method trees are grown in dense patterns around the farmland.
- **Crop Rotation.** To make soil valuable in nutrients crop rotation technique is followed. Like turnips and radishes are rotated with cash crops to maintain the nutrient value of the soil.
- **Agrostological Measures.** In heavily eroded areas, grasses are planted and this technique is known as Agrostological Measures. It increases the nutrient level in the soils and when the grass is harvested it can be used as a fodder for cattle.

- **No-till farming:** Without changing the topography of the soil crops are grown all year round by tilling or contouring. This method increases the amount of water that penetrates the soil and can increase the organic matter of the soil which leads to larger yields.
- **Green Manures:** Green manures are grown to fertilise the farmland on which it grows. This technique can improve the structure of the soil and suppresses the growth of weeds.
- **Salinity Management:** When water evaporates from the soil, salt is left and can lead to damage to the soil and nutrient loss. Humic acids are used to prevent this. And saltbush is also grown to rejuvenate the soils and replace the loss of the nutrients.
- **Earthworms:** Earthworms have great benefits of farm land as they burrow under the ground and provide more area for water to rest. The excreta of the earthworms in the soil provide nutrients to the crops. They also help to prevent soil erosion and will lead to larger crop yields.

Therefore, World Soil Day is celebrated on 5 December annually to raise awareness about the importance of soil in our lives

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