# Soil Organic Matter Encyclopedia Article

## Soil Organic Matter

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# Soil Organic Matter

Additions of plant debris to soils will initiate the build up of organisms that will decompose the plant debris. After **decomposition** the organic material will be called organic matter or **soil humus**. This decomposed plant debris will be in the form of very small particles and will coat the sand, **silt**, and clay particles making up the mineral soil particles, thus making the soil black. The more organic matter accumulating in a soil, the darker the soil will become. Continued additions of organic matter are important to create a soft, tillable soil that is conducive to plant growth. Organic matter is important in soils because it will add nutrients, store **nitrogen** and other positive cations, and create a stronger soil aggregate that will withstand the impact of raindrops and thus prevent water **erosion**.