



Soil riddles: June 2026

By Aaron Lee M. Daigh

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AI-generated image courtesy of ChatGPT.

Think you know soils? Test your knowledge in our [“Soil Riddles”](#) series.

If you are the first to guess the soil series name and its exact geographical location correctly, we'll publish your name along with the answer in an upcoming issue.

Amazing soils are all around us. We see some quite often while others only on special occasions or during a once in a lifetime trip. My wife, daughter, and I love to travel and have had the opportunity to visit some bizarrely interesting soils. My wife and I are both soil scientists and know very well how excited soil scientists get when trying to identify a soil from a photo or even just a partial core.

In that spirit, I thought it would be fun for some of you to test your soils knowledge. Each month, I will share a new riddle in *CSA News*. If you are the first to guess the correct **soil series name** and its **exact geographical location**, I will publish your name along with the answer in an upcoming issue. Email your answers to me at adaigh2@UNL.edu ([send message](#)) with the subject line "*Soil Riddles June 2026.*"

Soil Riddle 1

*A sleeping giant stirred, and chaos poured down,
Mudflows carved the valleys, gray rubble all around.
But I stood on ridgetops where older ash had lain,
While my neighbor named for shadows held the eruption's terrain.*

Needles fell and rotted, Oi to Oa in turn,

Then a black A horizon where organics churn.

*My Bhs grew carbon-rich, spodic in somewhat of a way,
Dark brown with reddish mottles, glassy minerals on display.*

*Pumice fragments scatter through my ashy upper zone,
BC and C horizons, loose volcanic stone.*

*Then a buried solum waits, my 2Bwb below,
Where medial textures shift and amorphous clays now grow.*

*The rains come heavy here, a hundred inches or more,
Snow blankets me November through June upon neighboring forest floor.
Hemlock, silver fir, and cedar tower those floors overhead,
Huckleberry and beargrass will eventually carpet where I spread.*

*Cryic cold and glassy ash define my Vitricryand class,
Where the Cascades rise in grandeur and the old eruptions pass.
My name evokes a single star upon this mountain's side,
Near where the famous mountain blew its flanks open wide.*

What is my series name, and on which exact giant's flank do I reside?

Last month's winner

The answer to last month's (May 2026) riddle was "Pocum soil series at Panorama Point overseeing Fiery Furnace and Devils Garden in Arches National Park, Utah."

Congratulations to **John E. Stranzl, Jr.**, who was the first to answer the riddle. He is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, School of Natural

Resources. Stranzl works at the

intersection of machine learning, environmental science, and advanced imaging, informed by more than 20 years of corporate R&D in computer vision and scientific software engineering. He is the creator of [GRIME AI](#), designing its vision framework for ecohydrological modeling and environmental imaging.



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