Science Societies

Soil riddles: November 2026

By Aaron Lee M. Daigh

October 29, 2026

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 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, here is a riddle for you!

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 **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 November 2026."*

Good luck and have fun!

Soil Riddle 1

The ocean retreated and left sandy sediments behind,

On marine terraces where depressions you'll find.

Litter of leaves forms my Oi veneer,

Twigs and moss in a root mat appear.

My A1 is black, fine sandy loam so dark,

Then A2 turns loamy, very dark gray at the mark.

The E horizon pale, white when dry,

An albic layer where eluviation passed by.

Below, my Bh turns black with organic art,

Mucky loam horizons where roots depart.

Then Bsm arrives extremely hard and firm,

Strong brown cemented sands, an ortstein pan confirmed.

Bsm1, Bsm2, Bsm3 in layers stack,

Iron-cemented prison, no roots get back.

Poorly drained in depressions where cranberries grow,

Shore pine and Sitka spruce in the maritime show.

Sandy, mixed, isomesic, ortstein, and shallow I stand,

A Typic Duraquod on this coastal strand.

Rhododendron and salal and huckleberry too,

Named perhaps for the darkness my cemented pans pursue.

South of a town whose name I almost share,

Where the coast meets foggy air.

Common? Oh no… not at all,

Nevertheless, you might stand in ahh!

What is my series name, and where do I lie?

Last month's winner

The answer to last month's (October 2026) riddle was "Miskoaki soil series, located along the North Shore of Lake Superior in Minnesota and the shoreline in Northern Wisconsin." Congratulations to **Swagat Subedi** who answered correctly!

Swagat Subedi

Swagat is a graduate student in the Department of Plant and Soil Science at Texas Tech University, specializing in soil science. His research focuses on soil genesis, pedogenic processes, and vadose zone hydrology, particularly understanding how long-term soil development influences soil hydraulic properties and water movement through soil profiles. Swagat integrates process-based soil evolution modeling (SoilGen3), pedotransfer functions (Rosetta3), and numerical water flow simulations (HYDRUS-1D) to investigate how climate, vegetation, parent material, and soil age influence soil development and subsurface water fluxes. Through this research, he aims to improve our understanding of how pedogenesis and soil hydrological processes interact across diverse environmental conditions.

Email answer(s)

More soil riddles

Back to issue

Member Hub

Text © . The authors. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Except where otherwise noted, images are subject to copyright. Any reuse without express permission from the copyright owner is prohibited.