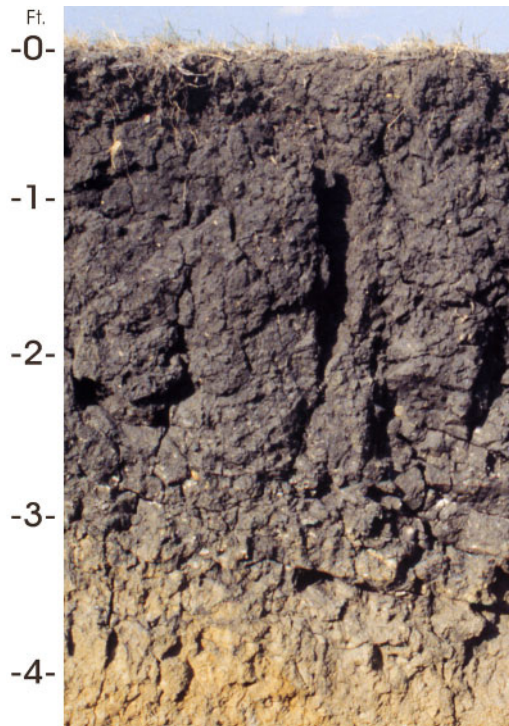


# HOUSTON BLACK -- TEXAS STATE SOIL



## Houston Black Soil Profile

Surface layer: black clay

Subsoil - upper: black clay with slickensides

Subsoil - lower: black clay with slickensides and calcium carbonate

Substratum: light olive brown clay

The Houston Black series occurs on about 1.5 million acres in the Blackland Prairie, which extends from north of Dallas south to San Antonio. Because of their highly expansive clays, Houston Black soils are recognized throughout the world as the classic Vertisols, which shrink and swell markedly with changes in moisture content. These soils formed under prairie vegetation and in calcareous clays and marls. Water enters the soils rapidly when they are dry and cracked and very slowly when they are moist.

Houston Black soils are used extensively for grain sorghum, cotton, corn, small grain, and forage grasses. They also occur in several metropolitan areas, where their very high shrink-swell potential commonly is a limitation affecting building site development.

The Professional Soil Scientists Association of Texas has recommended to the State Legislature that the Houston Black series be designated the State soil. The series was established in 1902.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). *USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

**USDA NRCS**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service