

# Soils of the Northern Territory | factsheet

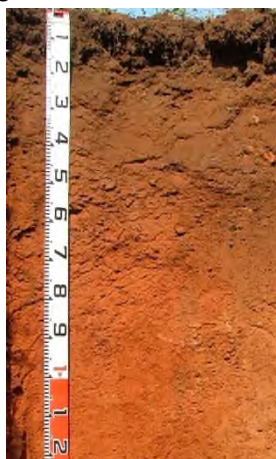
Soils are developed over thousands of years and are made up of air, water, minerals, organic material and microorganisms. They can take on a wide variety of characteristics and form ecosystems which support all life on earth.

In the NT, soils are an important natural resource for land-based agricultural industries. These industries and the soils that they depend on are a major contributor to the Northern Territory economy and need to be managed sustainably.

## Common Soils in the Northern Territory

### Kandosols

Often referred to as red, yellow and brown earths, these massive and earthy soils are important for agricultural and horticultural production. They occur throughout the NT and are widespread across the Top End, Sturt plateau, Tennant Creek and Central Australian regions.



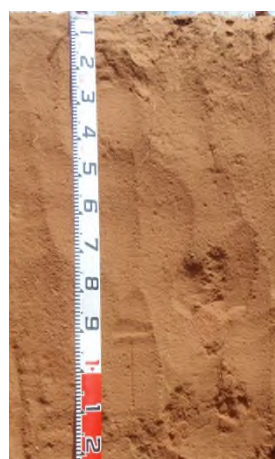
*Darwin sandy  
Red Kandosol*

### Tenosols

These weakly developed or sandy soils are important for horticulture in the Ali Curung and Alice Springs regions. They show some degree of development (minor colour or soil texture increase in subsoil) down the profile. They include sandplains, granitic soils and the sand dunes of beach ridges and deserts.



*Katherine loamy Red  
Kandosol*



*Alice Springs  
sandplain Tenosol*

### Hydosols

These seasonally inundated soils support both high value conservation areas important for ecotourism as well as the pastoral industry. They generally occur in higher rainfall areas on coastal floodplains, swamps and drainage lines. They also include soils in mangroves and salt flats.



*Coastal floodplain  
Hydosol*

### Rudosols

These are very shallow soils or those with minimal soil development. Rudosols include very shallow rocky and gravelly soils across rugged terrain such as the Arnhem Plateau but also pure sand soils in deserts.

### Chromosols

These are soils with an abrupt increase in clay content below the top soil. They are generally restricted to small occurrences across colluvial and alluvial plains.

**Vertosols**

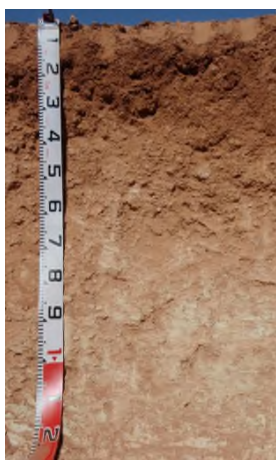
These cracking clays or blacksoils are critical to the pastoral industry. They are common across coastal floodplains of the Top End, the Barkly Tablelands and basalt and alluvial plains of the Victoria River District.



Victoria River District Vertosol

**Calcarosols**

These are soils with calcium carbonate often formed on limestone. They are restricted to small pockets in Central Australia, the Victoria River District including Gregory National Park and the Katherine and Mataranka Districts.



Alice Springs Calcarosol

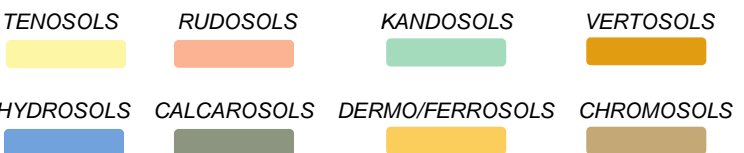
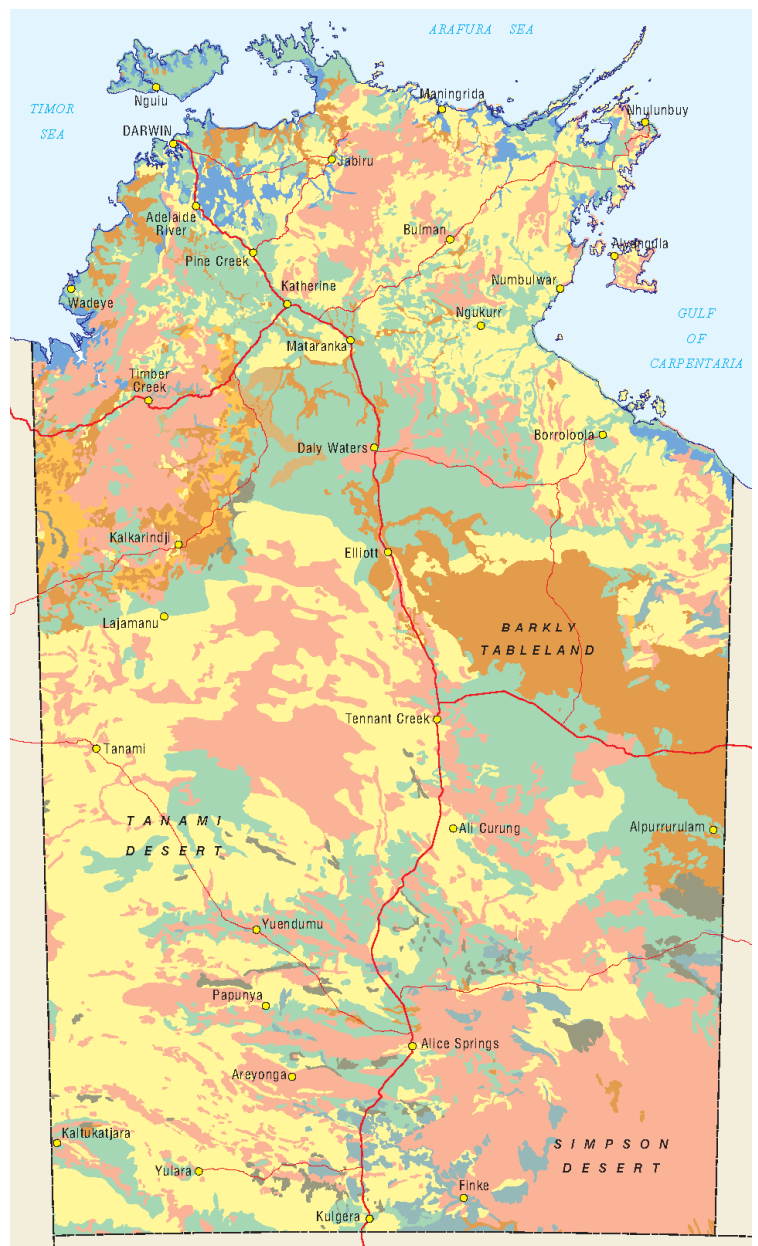
**Dermosols**

These are soils with highly developed structural characteristics. They occur in the Tindal area and other parts of the Daly River Basin.

**Ferrosols**

These are iron rich soils generally formed on basalt. They are restricted to volcanic landscapes of the Victoria River District and to a smaller extent in the Roper River Catchment.

**Soil Map of the NT**



**Less common soils in the NT:**

**Sodosols**

Dispersive soils high in sodium with an abrupt increase in clay content between the topsoil and subsoil. They are restricted to small occurrences in the southern region.

**Anthrosols**

Resulting from human activities. i.e. urban environments, industrial areas and mine sites.

**Organosols**

Organic and peaty soils in coastal floodplain back swamp environments.