

step 7 IDENTIFYING THE TOPSOIL COLOUR

Conducted in the paddock

In this step you will identify Land Class 5:

Land Class 5: Land suitable for less intensive agriculture such as high density grazing or farm forestry and cultivation associated with pasture development.

You will need:

Property plan
Overlay 2
Red permanent marker
Water bottle

Refer to the areas you outlined on Overlay 2 as being non-arable.

For the purpose of this exercise the definition of the topsoil is the top 10 cm of soil.

The topsoil is the principal soil zone for water and nutrient uptake by plants. The colour of the topsoil can give an indication of the nutrient status. A pale or grey coloured surface soil often indicates that the topsoil has little organic matter, is low in nutrients, and has a low water holding capacity.

A red, brown or black topsoil, on the other hand, often indicates more fertile conditions, and therefore is favoured for agriculture.

Step 7: Topsoil colour

- The colour of the topsoil should be assessed when it is wet.
- Using the water bottle, lightly wet the topsoil (but do not saturate).
- Using the colour swatches in the diagram below, work out, using the dominant colour, whether the topsoil will be classed as pale.

On the plan, mark out the boundary and label with the appropriate land class code the following areas using the red marker:

Pale topsoil - **STP**

Red, brown or black topsoil - Continue



Diagram 1 Pale soils. If any of these colours approximate the topsoil colour, then the topsoil is considered pale.



Figure 15 Pale topsoil; although the very surface of the soil is dark, the dominant colour in the top 10 cm is pale.

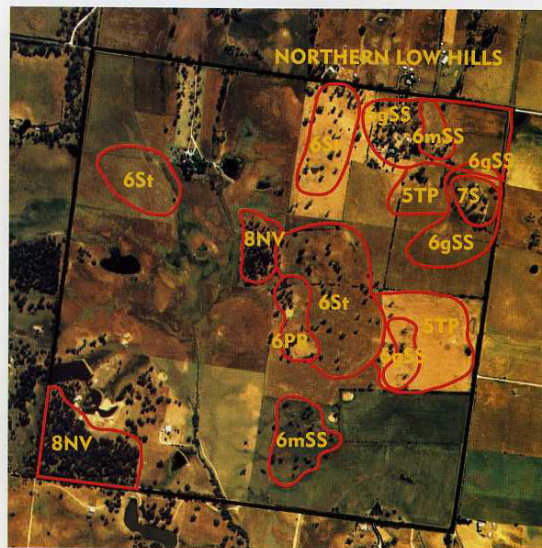


Figure 16 Step 7: Marking out areas of pale topsoil on the plan.