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# The Soil Underfoot: Infinite Possibilities for a Finite Resource

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**The Soil Underfoot: Infinite Possibilities for a Finite Resource**

The largest part of the world’s food comes from its soils, either directly from plants, or via animals fed on pastures and crops. Thus, it is necessary to maintain, and if possible, improve the quality—and hence good health—of soils, while enabling them to support the growing world population. **The Soil Underfoot: Infinite Possibilities for a Finite Resource** arms readers with historical wisdom from various populations around the globe, along with current ideas and approaches for the wise management of soils. It covers the value of soils and their myriad uses viewed within human and societal contexts in the past, present, and supposed futures.

In addition to addressing the technical means of maintaining soils, this book presents a culturally and geographically diverse collection of historical attitudes to soils, including philosophical and ethical frameworks, which have either sustained them or led to their degradation. Section I describes major challenges associated with climate change, feeding the increasing world population, chemical pollution and soil degradation, and technology. Section II discusses various ways in which soils are, or have been, valued—including in film and contemporary art as well as in religious and spiritual philosophies, such as Abrahamic religions, Maori traditions, and in Confucianism.

Section III provides stories about soil in ancient and historic cultures including the Roman Empire, Greece, India, Japan, Korea, South America, New Zealand, the United States, and France. Section IV describes soil modification technologies, such as polymer membrane barriers, and soil uses outside commercial agriculture including the importance of soils for recreation and sports grounds. The final section addresses future strategies for more effective sustainable use of soils, emphasizing the biological nature of soils and enhancing the use of "green water" retained from rainfall.

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