



USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

How to Use the Site Indicator Scorecards

Equipment Required:

- pen or pencil

General Instructions:

- Go to the site you want to rate and look around the entire site.
- Concentrate on the specific area(s) on the site that you want to use.
- Complete the field notes section below.
- Rate each indicator on the back side of this card by marking an **X** in the appropriate box.
- Complete soil assessment scorecard.

Field Notes:

Date: _____

Name of Site _____

Location _____

Weather Conditions _____

Current Use of the Site _____

Future Plans for the Site _____

Site Drawing:

SITE INDICATOR SCORECARD

for Connecticut Community Gardeners



USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Date: _____

Site Name: _____

Form Completed By: _____

applicable box

Site Indicator	Poor	Tolerable	Best
Accessibility			
1. Walking distance to site.	10+ minutes. <input type="checkbox"/>	5-10 minutes. <input type="checkbox"/>	0-5 minutes. <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Availability of parking.	None. <input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult. <input type="checkbox"/>	No problem. <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Visibility from street.	Can't see site, or it is very visible. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat visible. <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Hilliness of site.	Very hilly. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some slope. <input type="checkbox"/>	Level or nearly level. <input type="checkbox"/>
Topography			
5. Direction the slope faces.	North. <input type="checkbox"/>	East, West. <input type="checkbox"/>	South. <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Bedrock, ledge, or large boulders on site.	Too many to work around. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some, but can work around them. <input type="checkbox"/>	None. <input type="checkbox"/>
Location/Distance to Water			
7. Water access -- city water, pond, or river for irrigation.	No water available on the site, and no access to bring it to site. <input type="checkbox"/>	Have to connect to city water or bring water to site. <input type="checkbox"/>	Water available easily. <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Water quality tested.	Bad quality, can't use. <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair quality. <input type="checkbox"/>	Good quality. <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Runoff.	After rainfall, a lot of soil washes from site. <input type="checkbox"/>	After rainfall, a little soil washes from site. <input type="checkbox"/>	After rainfall, no soil is seen to wash from site. <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Water on surface during the growing season (spring, summer, fall).	After a moderate rainfall, water stays on surface for a few days. <input type="checkbox"/>	After heavy rainfall, water stays on surface for a short time. <input type="checkbox"/>	After rainfall, no soil is seen to wash from site. <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Sun exposure through the day.	Shady, very little exposure. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sun is blocked some of the time. <input type="checkbox"/>	Mostly sunny. <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Amount of existing pavement on site.	Too much pavement, will interfere with plans for the site. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some, but can work around. <input type="checkbox"/>	None. <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Debris (construction materials, bricks, concrete, etc.)	A lot on the surface. <input type="checkbox"/>	Occasional. <input type="checkbox"/>	None. <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Shortcuts through site.	Lots. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some. <input type="checkbox"/>	None. <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Neighborhood pets.	Site used heavily by animals. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some use. <input type="checkbox"/>	No pet evidence observed. <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Human activity on site.	Lots of evidence of people on site. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some people use site. <input type="checkbox"/>	Very little or no evidence of people on site. <input type="checkbox"/>
17. What's growing on the site now?	Lots of unwanted trees or brush. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some unwanted trees and brush. <input type="checkbox"/>	Plants will not interfere with site plans. <input type="checkbox"/>
History of Site			
18. History of site.	Not known. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some stories may be true. <input type="checkbox"/>	Definitely known. <input type="checkbox"/>



How to Use the Soil Indicator Scorecards

Equipment Required:

- Shovel
- Wire coat hanger
- Pen or pencil
- Tape measure or ruler
- 1 gallon water for each soil scorecard

General Instructions:

- Go to the site you want to rate and look around the entire site.
- Select a typical spot and dig a hole approximately one to two feet deep. This hole will be used for the soil examination.
- Dig another hole five inches deep nearby. This hole will be used to see how fast water moves through the soil.
- Complete the field notes section below.
- Rate each indicator on the back side of this card by marking an **X** in the appropriate box.
- Complete additional soil scorecards for other locations on your site.
- Complete site assessment scorecard.

Field Notes:

Date: _____

Name of Site _____

Location _____

Weather Conditions _____

Current Use of the Site _____

Future Plans for the Site _____

Site Drawing:

SOIL INDICATOR SCORECARD

for Connecticut Community Gardeners



NRCS

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Date: _____

Site Name: _____

Form Completed By: _____

applicable box

Soil Indicator	Poor	Tolerable	Best
19. Can you use the soil that is on the site? (Is there soil on this site?)	No. Need to bring soil to site. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some. <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, all soil is workable. <input type="checkbox"/>
Surface of Soil			
20. Cracks on soil surface in July and August.	Many cracks. <input type="checkbox"/>	Occasional thin cracks. <input type="checkbox"/>	No cracks. <input type="checkbox"/>
21. How do existing plants grow? Compare same kind of plant.	Plants are dead or scraggly. <input type="checkbox"/>	Plant color and size are different. <input type="checkbox"/>	Plants look healthy. <input type="checkbox"/>
Soil Examination			
22. Smell of soil.	Oily, chemically, gasoline, rotten eggs, or bad or strange. <input type="checkbox"/>	No smell. <input type="checkbox"/>	Fresh, earthy. <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>It is not possible to smell some contaminants, like lead, in the soil. Avoid the site if the soil smell is poor unless you can determine the site history is safe and environmental testing for contaminants indicates the areas is safe. Do not touch the soil if the smell is offensive.</i>			
23. How hard is it to dig a hole two feet deep?	Not possible. <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately difficult. <input type="checkbox"/>	Easy. <input type="checkbox"/>
24. Try to insert a wire coat hanger into soil surface two days after rainfall during the growing season.	Coat hanger bends or cannot be inserted. <input type="checkbox"/>	Coat hanger can be pushed in with pressure. <input type="checkbox"/>	Coat hanger goes in easily with fingers. <input type="checkbox"/>
	Soil feels firm. <input type="checkbox"/>	Soil feels somewhat firm. <input type="checkbox"/>	Soil feels loose. <input type="checkbox"/>
25. Depth of soil	Less than 1 foot. <input type="checkbox"/>	Between 1 and 2 feet. <input type="checkbox"/>	More than 2 feet. <input type="checkbox"/>
26. Depth of topsoil layer	0-2 inches. <input type="checkbox"/>	2-5 inches. <input type="checkbox"/>	5+ inches. <input type="checkbox"/>
27. Color of topsoil layer	Yellow, gray, multi-colored. <input type="checkbox"/>	Light brown. <input type="checkbox"/>	Black, dark brown, dark red, color is uniform. <input type="checkbox"/>
28. Moisture of soil two days after heavy rain.	Soil is very dry or very wet. <input type="checkbox"/>	Soil is somewhat dry or muddy. <input type="checkbox"/>	Soil is moist, but not muddy. <input type="checkbox"/>
29. How quickly water drains in one foot deep hole during the growing season.	Water stays in hole and doesn't drain after 15 minutes. <input type="checkbox"/>	Water drains, but less than one inch in 15 minutes. <input type="checkbox"/>	Water enters soil quickly and moves down more than one inch in 15 min. <input type="checkbox"/>
30. How does moist soil feel (texture) -- <i>Use Guide to Soil Texture by Feel Handbook.</i>	Sand, loamy sand, sandy clay, silty clay, or clay. <input type="checkbox"/>	Clay loam, silty clay loam, or sandy clay loam. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sandy loam, loam, or silt loam. <input type="checkbox"/>
31. How moist soil particles hold together.	Soil is hard and very difficult to break with fingers. <input type="checkbox"/>	Soil breaks apart with some difficulty with fingers. <input type="checkbox"/>	Soil crumbles easily with fingers. <input type="checkbox"/>
32. Roots in the top 12 inches of soil.	None. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some, roots grow mostly across the soil, not down. <input type="checkbox"/>	Many, roots grow mostly down into the soil, not across. <input type="checkbox"/>
33. Worms and other bugs in the soil.	None. <input type="checkbox"/>	A few. <input type="checkbox"/>	Many. <input type="checkbox"/>
34. Stones or rocks in the soil.	Too many. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some. <input type="checkbox"/>	None. <input type="checkbox"/>
35. Debris in the soil (bricks, construction materials, glass, concrete, etc.)	Too much to dig around. <input type="checkbox"/>	A little bit, doesn't interfere with digging. <input type="checkbox"/>	None. <input type="checkbox"/>
36. Rotten stumps, old trees in the soil.	Lots of stumps and trees. <input type="checkbox"/>	A few small pieces. <input type="checkbox"/>	None. <input type="checkbox"/>