SOIL INFORMATION AT THE ARC

The Agricultural Research Council - Institute for Soil, Climate and Water (ARC-ISCW) is the custodian of the Soil Information System, a National Asset that comprises the following:

- Soil Profile Database containing 19 000 soil profiles.
- Land Type and Climate Zone Information System containing soil, terrain and climate information for over 7 000 unique areas.
- Western Cape Soil Information System.
- Soil Documentation System containing reference to 4 700 reports and 16 000 soil maps.
- Digital Soil Map Information System containing over 2 800 soil maps for 512 soil surveys.

All these systems are managed by the ARC-ISCW Pedometrics Programme and are continually being extended and updated.

The most recently developed information system deals with Soil Profile Photographs. Increasing requests are received from researchers in the ARC as well as researchers and students from universities who need soil photographs for publications, poster presentations, etc. The updating of the present Soil Classification System book also requires good quality photos. As the existing photos were collected over many years by various soil scientists and from locations all over South Africa they are of immeasurable value. Due to financial and capacity constraints and changes in the land use patterns these photos cannot be replaced. Although many of them date back to the 1960s and 1970s they were of such high quality that it is possible to improve the colours and save them in a digital format. Over 1 200 soil photos are available and have been preserved for future use.
Soil profile photograph before…………..and after colour correction

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