

Chapter 2 Lesson 4: Soil Conservation

1. Remember from lesson 3 – fertile soil is rich with humus.
 - a. **Sod:** thick mass of tough roots at the surface of the soil which keeps the plant in place and retains moisture.

2. **Natural Resource:** anything in the environment that humans use.
 - a. Soil is one of Earth's most valuable natural resources because everything that lives on land depends directly or indirectly on soil.
 - b. Fertile soil is considered a nonrenewable resource because it is in limited supply and it takes a long time to form.

3. **Soil Damage and Loss:** The value of soil is reduced when soil loses its fertility and when topsoil is lost due to erosion.
 - a. Loss of Fertility – when the soil is “exhausted” of nutrients.
 - This occurred in the South in the 1800s.

- Cotton crops exhausted the soil's fertility and so many farmers left their farms without trying to replenish nutrients.
- George Washington Carver developed farming methods to restore fertility.
 1. Peanuts and legumes help fixate nitrogen by way of bacteria.
- b. Loss of Topsoil – where soil was exposed, water and wind carried away soil quickly
- c. **Dust Bowl:** erosion in the southern plains of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Colorado.
 - Long drought turned the soil on parts of the Great Plains to dust.

4. **Soil Conservation:** the management of soil to prevent its destruction.

- a. **Contour Plowing:** farmers plow their fields along the curves of a slope, thus helping to slow the runoff of excess rainfall and prevent it from washing the soil away.

- b. **Conservation Plowing:** farmers disturb the soil and its plant cover as little as possible.
- c. **Crop Rotation:** a farmer plants different crops in a field each year.