

SSSSL Newsletter

SOIL SCIENCE SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

P.O. Box 10, Peradeniya, 20400, Sri Lanka. e-mail: soilscisoclk@gmail.com Web : www.ssssl.org

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Annual General Meeting 2014/2015

The 44th Annual sessions and Annual general meeting of the Soil Science Society was held on 20th March 2014 at SRICANSOL Centre, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya with participation of around 60 members. The customary Joachim Memorial Lecture was delivered by Prof. K.A Nandasena, Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. The lecture entitled "Present Status in Land Degradation and Future Challenges" provided an overview on different land degradation processes and legislation framework to combat land degradation in Sri Lanka.

The Joachim Memorial Lecture was followed by the technical session. Two members of the Soil Science Society made scientific contributions by delivering oral presentations. Dr. D.A.L. Leelamanie, Senior Lecturer, Department of Soil Science, University of Ruhuna presented research findings on "Distribution and behavior of water repellency in coastal dune sands covered by Casuarinas Shelterbelt" Her presentation highlighted another important variable that need to be considered in soil hydrology studies. Dr Saman Herath, senior lecturer attached to the Department of Export Agriculture, Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture delivered a presentation on "Sequestering Carbon with Biochar by avoidance of CO₂ emissions from original feed stock and protection of native soil organic matter" During his presentation, he summarized some of the key findings of his PhD research conducted in the Massey University, New Zealand.

Field Visit to Battalangunduwa

After the Annual General Meeting, members headed out on a field trip to Battalangunduwa.



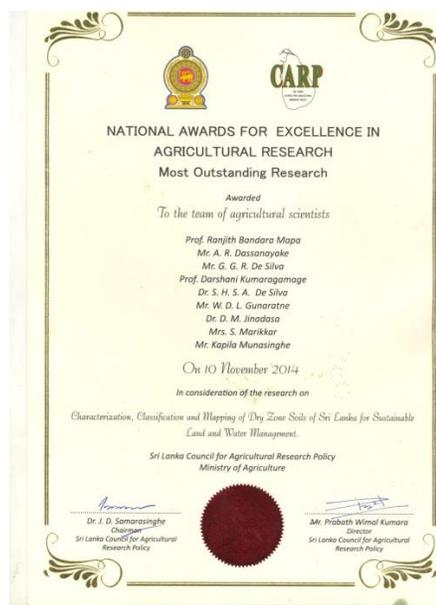
Mr. Anil Dasanayaka describing a Reddish Brown Latasolic soil profile

The field trip was a good experience for Members as they got a valuable opportunity to explore three great soil groups, Sandy Regosols, Reddish Brown Earths and Reddish Brown Latasolic soils and also land-scape variability on their way to Battalangunduwa. Eminent member of the SSSSL Mr. Anil Dassanayaka shared his wealth of experience on the soil survey and field characterization of soils among the members by describing soil profiles. The visit to Battalangunduwa was an exceptional experience for the members who were able to witness the daily routing and socio-economic aspects of the inhabitants of this small fishing village. The evening gathering turned to a relaxing event at the isolated island.

The society is thankful to its member, Mr. Ananda Weerawarne, Research Officer in charge and his staff for facilitating the field trip.

SRICANSOL Project received another National Award

Proving the sustainability and the national importance of the outcomes, the SRICANSOL project, it bagged another award at one of the most prestigious award ceremonies in Sri Lanka. This time, SRICANSOL project won the First Place of National Awards for Excellence in Agricultural Research awarded by Sri Lanka Council for Agricultural Research Policy, Ministry of Agriculture. The award ceremony was held on 10th November 2014 which was graced by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksha, then President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.



National Award Certificate Won by the SRICANSOL project

The project outcomes at the Phase III, Characterization, Classification and Mapping of Dry Zone Soils for the Land and Water Management received this national level recognition. Project was led by Professor R B Mapa from the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya and other team members from SSSSL included Professor Darshani Kumaragamage, Mr. A.R. Dassanayake, Dr. S.H.S.A. De Silva, Mr. W D L Gunaratne, Dr. D M Jinadasa, Mr. G.G.R. de Silva, Ms. Shifaya Marikkar and Mr. M A K Munasinghe. Team members from Canadian Society of Soil Science who contributed for the project were Prof. Tee Boon Goh from University of Manitoba and Mr. Robert G. Eilers. The SRICANSOL (1995 – 2010) project was realized through the Soil Science of Sri Lanka and the Canadian Society of Soil Science collaborated through the International Twinning Partnership Program. The project was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supporting the Agricultural Institute of Canada.

SSSSL Office Bearers: 2014/2015

Following members were elected to the executive committee during the AGM for the year 2014/2015

President: Dr. R S Dharmakeerthi
Vice President: Prof. K.A.Nandasena
General Secretary: Dr. A.P.Heenkende
Treasurer: Mr. Upali Yapa
Editor: Dr. U. W. A. Vitharana
Auditor: Dr. W. M. J. Bandara

Committee Members

Dr. P. Weerasinghe
 Dr. I. Herath
 Dr. M.G.T.S. Amarasekara
 Mrs. T. ErangaWeerawardena
 Mrs. N. Renuka Silva
 Dr. W.S. Dandeniya
 Mr. A.H. Kulasiri
 Ms. U.Rathnayake
 Mrs. R.P. Hettiarachchi
 Dr. D.A.L. Leelamanie

Public Lecture on Soil Productivity Management through Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices



Mr W.D.L. Gunaratne, former Director General, Department of Export Agriculture and Past president of Soil science Society a Sri Lanka delivered a public lecture on “Soil Productivity Management through adoption of good agricultural practices” This event was organized by the SSSSL and which was held on 4th June 2014 at the SRICANSOL Centre, Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture.

The lecture was enriched with wealth of information from research findings and unparalleled field experience gained by Mr. Gunaratne. The presentation was well received by the audience and concluded with a fruitful discussion. After this activity, SSSSL organized a tea party to celebrate the achievement of Mr. Gunaratne who was selected as the

Executive Director of the International Pepper Community (IPC), Jakarta, Indonesia. The International Pepper Community is an intergovernmental organization of pepper producing countries including Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam as permanent members and Papua New Guinea as an associate member. While congratulating Mr. Gunaratne for his achievement the SSSSL wishes him the greatest success.

SSSSL facilitated Activities to Popularize Soil Science among Undergraduates

The Soil Science Society has taken steps to popularize the soil science among undergraduates of different Universities of Sri Lanka. As an initiation, the SSSSL fully funded a one day workshop on “GIS for Agricultural Research” which was organized by the Soil Science Society of the Faculty of Agriculture. This one-day workshop was conducted on 3rd May 2014 and the SSSSL member Dr. U.W.A.Vitharana, Senior Lecturer, Department of Soil Science served as the resource person for this workshop voluntarily. The workshop comprised of an introductory session of the fundamentals of GIS, field session on GPS guided soil sampling and computer laboratory session on the use of GIS software for the construction of location maps and generating a continuous soil map.



Dr. Udaya Vitharana conducting the introductory session at the workshop on “GIS for Agricultural Research”.

The second activity funded by the SSSSL was a seminar titled “Future prospects of soil science in National Development”. This seminar was targeted to undergraduate students of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya to create an awareness on the discipline of Soil Science and its role of national development. Dr. W.M.A.D.B. Wickremasinghe, Director, NRMC and Mr Priyanga Dematawa, General Manager, CIC Agribusiness served as resource persons.

SSSSL Organized a Seminar on Nutrient management for a healthy environment

Improper soil nutrient management is blamed for many environmental and health problems presently experienced by the

country. Dissemination of credible scientific information is upmost responsibility of professional organizations. By contributing to this national requirement, the SSSSL organized a seminar on Nutrient Management for healthy environment. Two eminent members of SSSSL who are presently in overseas served as resource persons at this event held on 17th July 2014. The presentation on Heavy metal contaminations in Sri Lanka Rice Growing Soils delivered by Dr. Ganga Hettiarachchi, Associate Professor of Soils and Environmental Chemistry, Kansas State University, USA was a comprehensive review of literature from Sri Lanka and elsewhere. The presentation on “Keeping Phosphorus on the land and out of waterways” by Prof. Dharshi Kumaragamage, Chair, Dept. of Environmental Studies Sciences University of Winnipeg, Canada highlighted significance of proper management of soil P for sustaining the environmental quality. Forty five members participated to the event.



Discussion session during the seminar on Nutrient Management for healthy environment

Mid Term Technical Excursion to study study the environmental impacts of Uma-Oya project

Mid Term Technical Session and Field Trip was held on 28th and 29th August 2014. The Technical session was comprised of four presentations addressing present concerns on sustainable soil management. Professor R.M.G. Rajapaksha, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya made a presentation on “Chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology (CKDu) revisited”. This presentation was a comprehensive review on the present status of knowledge, knowledge gaps and contradictions related to the causes of CKDu. Then, the SSSSL member Mr. K.M.S Kodikara presented his research findings on the Bio-availability of phosphorus in Soils of the Up Country Intermediate zone. Member, Ms.R.P Hettiarachchi delivered a presentation on Evaluation of the effect of biofilm bio fertilizer on growth and mineral composition of Havea seedling and finally Dr. A.L.T.Hewawasam, senior lecturer attached to the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya presented research evidences on the formation processes of Regoliths through spheroidal weathering in the tropical highlands. Sixty three members participated for the mid-term technical session.

Mid-term technical session was followed by the field trip to Bandarawela to examine the Soils in the Wet Zone. En-route, members visited the Seetha Eliya Agriculture Research and Development Institute and studied the potato seed production process. Moreover, the members got a rare opportunity to visit

the Uma-Oya project site and discuss the environmental benefits of the project and also possible environmental impacts with the project team. Friendly hospitalities by the FARAB construction team, IRAN is appreciated.



Mid-term technical excursion: Members of the SSSSL at the Uma-Oya main tunnel project site

Fertilizer Day Program - 2014

The 10th Fertilizer Day program was held on 12th December 2014 at Regional Agriculture Research Station, Makandura, Gonawila (NWP). This year, the theme of fertilizer day program was “Soil productivity Management through Organic Approach”. At the outset of the technical session, Dr. Hemantha Wijewardena, Director, Organic Fertilizer Unit, Ministry of Agriculture delivered most updated information on Organic fertilizer production and use in Sri Lankan agriculture. Further, he highlighted the role of Organic Fertilizer Unit, on the popularizing and manufacturing organic fertilizer in Sri Lanka. His presentation was followed by another interesting presentation by Dr. Ananda Tennakoon on “Nutrient management in organic coconut cultivation”. The research outcomes pertaining to the the Compost Tea as an alternative plant nutrient source in Agriculture was presented by Ms. Priyanga Dissanayaka. Finally, Dr. Chammi Attanayake made an overview on organic amendments and bio-availability of contaminates in relation to organic agriculture. Thirty three members participated for this event and after the technical session participants were visited to organic paddy cultivation demonstration sites at Kuliypitiya, Narammala and organic farm at Kurunegala



Demonstration on compost making

Publications

Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka released the Sinhala translation of the book "Soils of the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka- Morphology, Characterization and Classification" The book is now available at the SRICANSOL center at Rs. 300.00 per copy.

New Members

Professionals from different institutions have obtained life membership of the Society during the year 2014-2015. We warmly welcome them to the society and expect their active participation in society activities and to popularize soil science in Sri Lanka. Details of the new members are:

No.	Name	Affiliation
1	Ms.T.D.P Liyanage	Department of Soil Science, University of Peradeniya
2	Dr.A.L.T Hewawasam	Dept.of Geography, University of Peradeniya
3	Ms. Erandhi M. Herath	PGIA ,University of Peradeniya
4	Mr. R.A.A.S Rathnayaka	Department of Soil Science, University of Peradeniya
5	Ms.C.S. Hettiarachchi	Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya
6	Ms. Rosemary Fernando	Dept. of Crop Science, University of Peradeniya

7	Dr.S.B Karunaratne	Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management. University of Wayamba.
8	Dr.M.S.Vithanage	Institute of Fundamental Studies, Hantana
9	Ms.W.M.L.S Weerasundara	Institute of Fundamental Studies, Hantana
10	Ms.D.M.T.U Bandara	Institute of Fundamental Studies, Hantana
11	Mr.S.M.P.Kumarathilaka	Institute of Fundamental Studies, Hantana
12	Ms.S.M.P.K. Senevirathne	Institute of Fundamental Studies, Hantana



"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

Aldo Leopold, 1949. A Sand County almanac.