**Biomass** – The material produced by a living organism or collection of organisms expressed in terms of weight.

**Cereal** – A plant that yields an edible grain, for example, maize, sorghum, and millet.

**Compaction** – A situation where the soil becomes hard and cannot allow air and water to enter.

**Capping** – A situation where the upper layer of the soil is covered by a thin crust of soil that does not allow water and air to enter or leave the soil. This is usually common in soils that have been recently ploughed followed by heavy rainfall.

**Evaporation** – A process by which liquid is changed into a gas.

**Green manure crop** – A crop grown to add soil organic matter and other nutrients to the soil.

**Hard pan** – Also called a plough pan. A hard, compact layer at the tillage depth caused by continuous use of a plough (mouldboard). Roots of plants cannot penetrate the hard layer.

**Host plant** – A living plant from which a parasite obtains nutrition.

**Humus** – The end product of the degradation of organic matter that improves the soil structure, provides nutrients for plants and increases the capacity of the soil to store nutrients and water.

**Hybrid** – A plant which grows from seed produced as the result of a controlled cross between two genetically unlike parents. Such hybrids are usually very uniform.

**Hygiene** – Practices that are required to keep plants healthy.

**Leaching** – Nutrients moving with water below the rooting zone of plants.

**Microbes/Micro-organisms** – A living organism so small it cannot be seen by the naked eye.

**Mixed farming** – A farming enterprise consisting of different farming
ventures like seasonal crops, vegetables, orchard, fish farming, beekeeping, tree planting, mushroom, poultry, sheep, rabbits, beef and dairy cattle.

**Moisture-holding capacity** – The ability of the soil to hold water. A clay soil has higher moisture-holding capacity than does a sandy soil.

**Mulch** – Protective covering of the soil surface by various materials such as fresh or dry organic matter applied to prevent evaporation of moisture, regulate temperature and control weeds.

**Open-pollinated variety** – Seed produced from random, natural crosses between individuals within a selected population of a species.

**Plant population** – The number of plants in any given area.

**Pollution** – The spoiling of water, soil or air by harmful chemicals.

**Predator** – An organism that lives by killing and consuming other organisms.

**Recycling** – The use of waste for another purpose.

**Resource base** – Means of production available to the farmer, e.g., soil, water, manure, labour and capital.

**Soil fertility** – The ability of a soil to supply the required type and amount of nutrients necessary for the growth of a particular crop or vegetation system.

**Soil structure** – describes the size and shape of soil particles and how they are arranged relative to each other. Think of soil structure as the ‘architecture’ of the soil.

**Synthetic** – Made by an artificial or chemical process rather than by a natural one.

**Tilth** – Physical condition of soil for seedbed.

**Toxic** – poisonous.
REFERENCES


Conservation Farming Unit, Zambia, 2006. Conservation Farming Handbook for Ox Farmers in Agro Ecological Regions I and II, with support from FAO.


Laura van Scholl, 1981. Soil Fertility. Agromisa, Wageningen, the Netherlands


Steiner, K.G., 1982. Intercropping in Tropical Smallholder Agriculture with Special Reference to West Africa, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Eschborn, Germany
