

## Lithic Contact

### ***Contact between unconsolidated soil material and the underlying root-restrictive hard bedrock***

#### **Concept and Background Information**

The [lithic contact](#) is the boundary between unconsolidated soil material and the underlying root-restrictive hard bedrock. Any cracks that allow penetration by roots are spaced more than 10 cm apart. The underlying bedrock is hard enough to make hand digging impractical, if not impossible (the cementation class is strongly cemented to indurated).

#### **Generalized Characteristics**

- 1) The contact is to underlying hard bedrock.
- 2) Cementation class is strongly cemented to indurated.
- 3) Spaces where roots can penetrate are more than 10 cm apart.
- 4) Underlying material is not a diagnostic horizon (such as a duripan or a petrocalcic horizon).

#### **Common Horizon Nomenclature**

A lithic contact is identified at the boundary between soil and continuous hard bedrock, such as the upper boundary of an R horizon. *Note: A lithic contact is NOT recognized at the upper boundary of a pedogenically cemented diagnostic horizon, such as a petrocalcic horizon or a duripan.*



Soil profile with a lithic contact over hard limestone. Note that the upper part of the profile consists of soil and loose rock fragments. The lithic contact is at the top of the continuous bedrock layer, which comprises about the lower third of the photo.

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