



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**CHARACTERISATION, CLASSIFICATION AND SUITABILITY FOR
OIL PALM OF SOME COMMON SOILS IN TAWAU-SEMPORNA
AREA, SABAH**

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By

ARIF SUGANDI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia
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of the requirement for the degree of Master of Agricultural Science

**CHARACTERISATION, CLASSIFICATION AND
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April 2005

Chairman : Associate Professor Siti Zauyah Darus, PhD

Faculty : Agriculture

Seven most common soils on different parent materials from oil palm estates in Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah were selected for this study. The study was carried out due to the lack of detailed information for proper classification and management of the soils. The objectives are therefore to determine their physical, chemical, mineralogical and micromorphological properties; to classify them according to the FAO/UNESCO Legend, the Sabah Classification System, the World Reference Base (WRB) and the Soil Taxonomy and to compare the usefulness of these different systems; and to evaluate their fertility status and suitability for oil palm.

All the soils have deep solum (>100 cm) and oxic or argillic horizons. Soil color and texture vary depending on the parent materials. Bulk density of andesitic soils is lower than the rest of the soils.

Soil pH of the soils are acidic (<5.0) and have a net negative charge. Except for the andesitic basalt soil, the studied soils have mainly low amount of bases and capacity exchange cation (CEC). Soil N, P and K are also mostly low. Soil Mg is high on the andesitic basalt and tuffaceous sedimentary rocks soils. For oil palm cultivation, the soils are of low to very low fertility.

Most of the studied soils are highly weathered due to the dominance of kaolinite, quartz, goethite, hematite and gibbsite. Andesitic basalt and tuffaceous sedimentary rock soils are however less weathered as indicated by the presence of 2:1 clay minerals, illite and feldspars. The most interesting mineralogical and micromorphological anomaly is the presence of cristobalite in the soils over sedimentary rocks indicating the volcanic influence on the soils through the addition of volcanic ash and by the presence of tuffaceous materials.

The studied soils are classified into different soil types according to the various classification systems indicating each soil have specific properties. The classification of soils according to the WRB systems appears to give more detailed information and better interpretation on soil properties and management than the FAO/UNESCO legend and Soil Taxonomy.

Based on the Fertility Capability Classification, the studied soils are classified into different fertility groups with major problems of low CEC, Al toxicity and K deficiency. No major constraint is encountered on the andesitic basalt soil due to its

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**PENCIRIAN, PENGELASAN DAN KESESUAIAN UNTUK KELAPA SAWIT
BEBERAPA JENIS TANAH DI TAWAU-SEMPORNA, SABAH**

Oleh

ARIF SUGANDI

April 2005

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Siti Zauyah Darus, PhD

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Tujuh jenis tanah daripada bahan induk yang berbeza dari kawasan kelapa sawit di Tawau-Semporna, Sabah dipilih untuk kajian ini. Kajian ini dilakukan kerana maklumat yang terhad bagi kegunaan pengelasan dan pengurusan tanah-tanah ini. Objektif daripada kajian ini ialah untuk menentukan sifat-sifat fizik, kimia, mineralogi dan mikromorfologi; pengelasan tanah-tanah tersebut mengikut Sistem FAO/UNESCO, Sistem Pengelasan Sabah, World Reference Base (WRB) dan Sistem Taksonomi Tanah dan membandingkan penggunaan diantara sistem-sistem ini; dan menilai tahap kesuburan dan kesesuaian tanah untuk penanaman kelapa sawit.

Kesemua tanah mempunyai solum yang dalam (>100 cm) dan horizon oksik atau argilik. Warna dan tekstur tanah berbeza bergantung kepada bahan induk tanah tersebut. Ketumpatan pukal tanah yang terbentuk daripada andesitik adalah rendah.

Kesemua pH tanah adalah asid (<5.0) dan mempunyai cas negatif. Kesemua tanah mempunyai kandungan bes dan keupayan pertukaran kation (KPK) yang rendah kecuali bagi tanah basalt andesitik. Kandungan N, P and K tanah-tanah ini adalah juga rendah. Kandungan Mg adalah tinggi pada tanah basalt andesitik. Untuk kelapa sawit, tanah-tanah ini mempunyai kadar kesuburan yang rendah.

Tanah-tanah ini mempunyai kadar luluhawa yang tinggi kerana mengandungi mineral kaolinit, kuarsa, goetit, hematite dan gibsit. Tanah basalt andesitik dan tanah endapan bertuff mempunyai kadar luluhawa yang kurang tinggi ditunjukkan oleh kehadiran lempung jenis 2:1, mika dan feldspar. Ciri-ciri mineralogi dan mikromorfologi yang menarik adalah kehadiran kristobalit pada tanah endapan menunjukkan pengaruh bahan volkanik dalam tanah tersebut.

Tanah-tanah pada kajian ini mempunyai pengelasan yang berbeza mengikut pelbagai sistem pengelasan tanah yang ada. Ianya menunjukkan bahawa tanah-tanah ini mempunyai sifat dan ciri yang berbeza. Pengelasan tanah-tanah tersebut berdasarkan Sistem WRB memberikan maklumat yang lebih terperinci mengenai ciri-ciri tanah dan intrepretasi yang lebih baik berbanding Sistem FAO/UNESCO dan Taksonomi Tanah.

Kajian pengelasan menurut *Fertility Capability Classification* (FCC) menunjukkan bahawa tanah-tanah tersebut mempunyai pengelasan yang berbeza. Masalah kesuburan yang paling utama ialah nilai KPK yang rendah, ketoksikan Al dan

kekurangan K. Tiada masalah pada tanah basalt andesitik kerana tahap kesuburannya yang lebih tinggi. Kajian analisa cluster menunjukkan tanah-tanah pada kajian ini berkumpulan sesuai dengan jenis bahan induk.

Tanah-tanah pada kajian ini adalah sesuai kepada sederhana-sesuai untuk tanaman kelapa sawit kecuali profil SDM-4. Profil SDM-4 digredkan sebagai marginal kepada sederhana-sesuai disebabkan oleh masalah tekstur, struktur dan kandungan nutrien yang rendah bagi tanaman kelapa sawit. Mengikut kajian ini, kebanyakan tanah-tanah tersebut mempunyai masalah perhubungan dengan kesuburan tanah. Masalah tanah lain adalah kecerunan, tanah berlaterit, tanah-tanah oksik, horizon yang berpasir.

Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa pedologi, pengelasan dan kesesuaian tanah adalah sangat penting untuk mengetahui sifat-sifat dan kesesuaian tanah sebenar untuk tanaman. Kajian serupa adalah sangat berguna dan harus dilakukan untuk jenis tanah yang lain di Malaysia.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
APPROVAL	x
DECLARATION	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xviii
LIST OF FIGURES	xxii
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Background of the study	1.1
1.2. Objectives of the study	1.3
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1. Geology of Tawau-Semporna Area, Sabah	2.1
2.2. Soils of Tawau-Semporna Area, Sabah	2.3
2.3. Classification of Sabah Soils	2.6
2.4. Soils on Sedimentary Rocks	2.8
2.4.1. Morphological Properties	2.8
2.4.2. Physical Properties	2.9
2.4.3. Chemical Properties	2.10
2.4.4. Mineralogical Properties	2.11
2.4.5. Micromorphological Properties	2.12
2.5. Soils on Volcanic Rocks	2.13
2.5.1. Morphological Properties	2.13
2.5.2. Physical Properties	2.16
2.5.3. Chemical Properties	2.16
2.5.4. Mineralogical Properties	2.17
2.5.5. Micromorphological Properties	2.19
2.6. Soil Suitability for Oil Palm	2.20
2.6.1. Soil Physical Suitability for Oil Palm	2.22
2.6.2. Soil Chemical Suitability for Oil Palm	2.25
3 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA	
3.1. Location	3.1
3.2. Geology	3.2
3.3. Physiography and Drainage	3.3
3.4. Vegetation and Present Land use	3.6
3.5. Climate	3.6
3.5.1. Temperature	3.7
3.5.2. Rainfall	3.8
3.5.3. Relative Humidity	3.10

3.5.4.	Evaporation and Evapotranspiration	3.10
3.5.5.	Sunshine hours	3.11
3.5.6.	Classification of Climate	3.11
4	MATERIALS AND METHODS	
4.1.	Site Selection and Soil Types	4.1
4.2.	Soil Description and Sampling	4.2
4.3.	Physical Analysis	4.3
4.3.1.	Granulometry	4.3
4.3.2.	Bulk Density	4.4
4.3.3.	Particle Density and Total Porosity	4.4
4.3.4.	Water Retention	4.5
4.4.	Chemical Analysis	4.5
4.4.1.	Soil pH	4.5
4.4.2.	Organic Carbon	4.5
4.4.3.	Total Nitrogen	4.6
4.4.4.	Total and Available Phosphorus	4.6
4.4.5.	Phosphorus Retention	4.6
4.4.6.	Exchangeable Bases and Extractable Al	4.7
4.4.7.	Cation Exchange Capacity	4.7
4.4.8.	Base and Al Saturation	4.8
4.4.9.	Free Fe Content	4.8
4.4.10.	Active Fe and Al Contents	4.8
4.5.	Mineralogical Analyses	4.9
4.5.1.	X-ray Diffraction	4.9
4.5.2.	Microscopic Method	4.10
4.6.	Micromorphological Analysis	4.10
4.7.	Soil Classification	4.11
4.8.	Soil Grouping by Cluster Analysis	4.11
5	CHARACTERISTICS AND CLASSIFICATION OF SOILS ON SEDIMENTARY ROCKS IN TAWAU-SEMPORNA AREA	
5.1.	Morphological Properties	5.1
5.1.1.	Profile SDM-1	5.2
5.1.2.	Profile SDM-2	5.3
5.1.3.	Profile SDM-3	5.4
5.1.4.	Profile SDM-4	5.4
5.2.	Physical Properties	5.5
5.2.1.	Particle Size Distribution	5.5
5.2.2.	Bulk Density and Porosity	5.9
5.2.3.	Water Retention	5.12
5.3.	Chemical Properties	5.17
5.3.1.	Soil Reaction	5.17
5.3.2.	Total Nitrogen and Organic Carbon	5.18
5.3.3.	Total and Available Phosphorus	5.20
5.3.4.	Phosphorus Retention	5.20
5.3.5.	Exchangeable Cations	5.21
5.3.6.	CEC and Base Saturation	5.22

5.3.7. Al Saturation	5.25
5.3.8. Forms of Fe	5.25
5.4. Mineralogical Properties	5.27
5.4.1. Sand Fraction	5.27
5.4.2. Silt Fraction	5.36
5.4.3. Clay Fraction	5.41
5.5. Micromorphological Properties	5.52
5.5.1. Microstructure and Voids	5.52
5.5.2. C/F Related Distribution	5.57
5.5.3. Coarse Materials	5.57
5.5.4. Fine Materials	5.62
5.5.5. Pedofeatures	5.67
5.6. Soil Classification	5.69
5.6.1. Classification according to the FAO/UNESCO Legend	5.69
5.6.1.1. Profile SDM-1	5.70
5.6.1.2. Profile SDM-2	5.71
5.6.1.3. Profile SDM-3	5.72
5.6.1.4. Profile SDM-4	5.72
5.6.2. Classification according to the Sabah Classification System	5.73
5.6.3. Classification according to the WRB System	5.73
5.6.3.1. Profile SDM-1	5.75
5.6.3.2. Profile SDM-2	5.76
5.6.3.3. Profile SDM-3	5.77
5.6.3.4. Profile SDM-4	5.78
5.6.4. Classification according to the Soil Taxonomy	5.79
5.6.4.1. Profile SDM-1	5.79
5.6.4.2. Profile SDM-2	5.80
5.6.4.3. Profile SDM-3	5.81
5.6.4.4. Profile SDM-4	5.82

6

CHARACTERISTICS AND CLASSIFICATION OF SOILS ON VOLCANIC ROCKS IN TAWAU-SEMPORNA AREA

6.1. Morphological Properties	6.1
6.1.1. Profile VLC-1	6.1
6.1.2. Profile VLC-2	6.3
6.1.3. Profile VLC-3	6.3
6.2. Physical Properties	6.4
6.2.1. Particle Size Distribution	6.4
6.2.2. Bulk Density and Porosity	6.8
6.2.3. Water Retention	6.9
6.3. Chemical Properties	6.14
6.3.1. Soil Reaction	6.14
6.3.2. Organic Carbon and Total Nitrogen	6.14
6.3.3. Total and Available Phosphorus	6.15
6.3.4. Phosphorus Retention	6.16
6.3.5. Exchangeable Cations	6.16

6.3.6. CEC and Base Saturation	6.17
6.3.7. Al Saturation	6.19
6.3.8. Forms of Fe	6.19
6.4. Mineralogical Properties	6.21
6.4.1. Sand Fraction	6.21
6.4.2. Silt Fraction	6.28
6.4.3. Clay Fraction	6.33
6.5. Micromorphological Properties	6.41
6.5.1. Microstructure and Voids	6.41
6.5.2. C/F Related Distribution	6.47
6.5.3. Coarse and Fine Materials	6.47
6.5.4. Pedofeatures	6.52
6.6. Soil Classification	6.54
6.6.1. Classification according to the FAO/UNESCO Legend	6.54
6.6.1.1. Profile VLC-1	6.55
6.6.1.2. Profile VLC-2	6.56
6.6.1.3. Profile VLC-3	6.56
6.6.2. Classification according to the Sabah Classification System	6.57
6.6.3. Classification according to the WRB System	6.57
6.6.3.1. Profile VLC-1	6.58
6.6.3.2. Profile VLC-2	6.59
6.6.3.3. Profile VLC-3	6.60
6.6.4. Classification according to the Soil Taxonomy	6.60
6.6.4.1. Profile VLC-1	6.60
6.6.4.2. Profile VLC-2	6.62
6.6.4.3. Profile VLC-3	6.63

7

EVALUATION OF SOILS FOR OIL PALM CULTIVATION

7.1. Introduction	7.1
7.2. Soil-Crop Suitability Classification	7.1
7.3. FAO-UNESCO Land Evaluation Classification	7.5
7.4. Fertility Capability Classification	7.13
7.5. Soil Grouping by Cluster Analysis	7.17
7.5.1. Cluster Analysis Vs FCC	7.20
7.5.2. Cluster Analysis Vs Soil Classification System	7.21
7.5.3. Cluster Analysis Vs Soil Suitability Classification	7.22
7.6. Management of the Studied Soils for Oil Palm	7.23
7.6.1. Low CEC	7.26
7.6.2. Low Base Saturation	7.27
7.6.3. Low Organic Matter and Soil N	7.27
7.6.4. Al Saturation and Low pH	7.28
7.6.5. Low Soil P	7.29
7.6.6. Steep Terrain	7.29
7.6.7. Lateritic Soil	7.30
7.6.8. Soil with Oxic Horizon	7.30
7.6.9. Sandy Surface Horizon of Profile SDM-4	7.31

8	GENERAL DISCUSSION	
8.1.	Morphological Properties	8.1
8.2.	Physical Properties	8.2
8.3.	Chemical Properties	8.6
8.4.	Mineralogical Properties	8.12
8.5.	Micromorphological Properties	8.14
8.6.	Soil Formation and Genesis	8.18
8.6.1.	Addition of Volcanic Materials	8.20
8.6.2.	Formation of Argillic Horizon	8.20
8.6.3.	Formation of Oxic Horizon	8.22
8.6.4.	Podzolisation	8.24
8.6.5.	Formation of Mottled Horizon	8.25
8.7.	Classification of Soils	8.26
9	CONCLUSION	9.1
REFERENCES		R.1
APPENDICES		A.1
Soil Description and Laboratory Data of the Studied Soil		A.1
Soil Map of the Study Area		A.43
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR		B.1

LIST OF TABLES

Table No		Page
2.1.	Major soils associations of Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah based on Acres <i>et al.</i> , (1975)	2.5
2.2.	Key to soil families of sedimentary soils with argillic and cambic horizons in Sabah (after Paramananthan, 1997)	2.10
2.3.	Key to soil families derived on volcanic rocks with oxic, argillic and cambic horizons in Sabah (after Paramananthan, 1997)	2.15
2.4.	Criteria for assessing the suitability of soil chemical properties for oil palm cultivation (Goh <i>et al.</i> , 1997)	2.26
3.1.	Climatic data of Tawau (Tawau Station, 1979 – 2002)	3.8
3.2.	Mean monthly rainfall (mm) of six rainfall stations located within the study area	3.9
4.1.	Profile No, location and parent materials of the representative soil profiles in this study	4.2
5.1.	Major morphological properties of the B horizons of soils developed on sedimentary rocks in Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.2
5.2.	Particle size distribution of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna Area, Sabah	5.8
5.3.	Water retention (%), v/v of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.15
5.4.	Soil acidity, exchangeable Al, organic carbon, total nitrogen, total and available P and P retention of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah.	5.19
5.5.	Exchangeable bases, Cation Exchange Capacity, Base and Al saturation of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.24
5.6.	Dithionate-citrate and oxalate extractable Fe form of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.26
5.7.	Composition of resistant minerals (%) in the total sand fraction of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.28

Table No		Page
5.8.	Composition of weatherable minerals (%) in the total sand fraction of sedimentary rock soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.29
5.9.	Relative abundance of minerals in the silt fraction of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.36
5.10.	Relative abundance of minerals in the clay fraction of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.43
5.11.	Micromorphological properties of the selected horizons of profile SDM-1	5.58
5.12.	Micromorphological properties of the selected horizons of profile SDM-2	5.59
5.13.	Micromorphological properties of the selected horizons of profile SDM-3	5.60
5.14.	Micromorphological properties of the selected horizons of profile SDM-4	5.61
5.15.	Classification of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to FAO/UNESCO Legend (1974 and 1990)	5.70
5.16.	Classification of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to Sabah Classification System (Acres <i>et al.</i> , 1974; Lankan, 1992)	5.74
5.17.	Classification of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to the WRB	5.75
5.18.	Classification of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to the Soil Taxonomy (Soil Survey Staff, 1999)	5.79
6.1.	Major morphological properties of the B horizons of volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.2
6.2.	Particle size distribution of volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.5
6.3.	Water retention (%), v/v of volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.10

Table No		Page
6.4.	Soil acidity, exchangeable Al, organic Carbon, total Nitrogen, total and available P and P retention of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah.	6.15
6.5.	Exchangeable bases, cation exchange capacity, base and Al saturation of volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.18
6.6.	Iron oxide content of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.20
6.7.	Composition of resistant minerals (%) in the total sand fraction of the volcanic soils	6.21
6.8.	Composition of weatherable minerals (%) in the total sand fraction of volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah.	6.23
6.9.	Relative abundance of minerals in the silt fraction of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah.	6.29
6.10.	Relative abundance of minerals in the clay fraction of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.34
6.11.	Micromorphological properties of the selected horizons of profile VLC-1	6.44
6.12.	Micromorphological properties of the selected horizons of profile VLC-2	6.45
6.13.	Micromorphological properties of the selected horizons of profile VLC-3	6.46
6.14.	Classification of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to FAO/UNESCO Legend (1974 and 1990)	6.55
6.15.	Classification of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to Sabah Classification System (Acres <i>et al.</i> , 1974; Lankan, 1992)	6.57
6.16.	Classification of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to the WRB system	6.58
6.17.	Classification of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to the Soil Taxonomy (Soil Survey Staff, 1999)	6.61
7.1.	Criteria for assessment of severity of soil limitations in oil palm (Goh and Chew, 1995)	2.29
7.2.	Criteria of soil suitability grading (Goh and Chew, 1995)	7.3

Table No		Page
7.3.	Soil suitability classification for oil palm of the soils from Tawau-Semporna area based on the Soil-Crop Suitability Classification	7.4
7.4.	Evaluation of land characteristics for oil palm (Paramananthan, 1987 and 2002)	7.9
7.5.	Soil suitability classification for oil palm of the soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah based on the modified FAO Land Evaluation (Paramananthan, 2003)	7.11
7.6.	Definition of Type, Substrata Type and Condition Modifiers	7.14
7.7.	FCC of the studied soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	7.15
8.1.	Main morphological properties of the common soils in Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	8.4
8.2.	Main physical properties of the studied soils (Horizons A and B)	8.5
8.3.	Main chemical properties of the studied soils (Horizon B)	8.8
8.4.	Soil chemical suitability of the effective rooting zone (100 cm) of the studied soils for oil palm cultivation	8.12
8.5.	Mineralogical composition of the soils based on XRD analysis	8.13
8.6.	Major micromorphological properties of the studied soils in Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	8.17
8.7.	Weathering index of the studied soils in Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	8.19
8.8.	Classification of the studied soils in Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah according to various classification systems	8.28

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No		Page
3.1.	Location of the study area in Sabah, Malaysia	3.1
3.2.	Location of the study area in the Semporna Peninsula	3.2
3.3.	Geology map of the study area (after Kirk (1961); Lim (1981); Lee (1981); Tate (2001))	3.4
3.4.	Physiography of the study area and Soil Pits Location	3.5
3.5.	Rainfall and rainday pattern of Tawau and Semporna region, Sabah	3.9
5.1.	Distribution of particle sizes with depth of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.10
5.2.	Bulk density and Total porosity of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.11
5.3.	Water retention with depth of the sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.16
5.4.	Relationship between water retention at 1500 kPa and clay content of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.17
5.5.	Relationship between P-retention and Fe-d of sedimentary soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	5.21
5.6.	X-ray diffractograms of iron oxide nodules of profiles SDM-1 and SDM-3	5.31
5.7.	X-ray diffractogram of sand fraction of profile SDM-1	5.32
5.8.	X-ray diffractogram of sand fraction of profile SDM-2	5.33
5.9.	X-ray diffractogram of sand fraction of profile SDM-3	5.34
5.10.	X-ray diffractogram of sand fraction of profile SDM-4	5.35
5.11.	X-ray diffractogram of silt fraction of profile SDM-1	5.38
5.12.	X-ray diffractogram of silt fraction of profile SDM-2	5.39
5.13.	X-ray diffractogram of silt fraction of profile SDM-3	5.40
5.14.	X-ray diffractogram of silt fraction of profile SDM-4	5.41
5.15.	SEM of clod from the upper horizon of profile SDM-1	5.44
5.16.	SEM of clod from profile SDM-3 at 50 cm	5.46
5.17.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction of profile SDM-1	5.47

Figure No		Page
5.18.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction, Bt2 horizon of profile SDM-1 after Mg, Mg-glycol, K and K+550°C treatments	5.48
5.19.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction of profile SDM-2	5.49
5.20.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction of Profile SDM-3	5.50
5.21.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction of Profile SDM-4	5.51
5.22.	Microstructure of profile SDM-1	5.53
5.23.	Microstructure of profile SDM-2	5.54
5.24.	Microstructure of profile SDM-3	5.55
5.25.	Microstructure of profile SDM-4	5.56
5.26.	Groundmass and basic mineral component of SDM-1	5.63
5.27.	Coarse materials in profile SDM-1	5.64
5.28.	Close porphyric c/f related distribution of Bt3 horizon of profile SDM-2	5.65
5.29.	Cristobalite found at the Bt horizons of profile SDM-2	5.65
5.30.	Groundmass of Bt horizons of profile SDM-3	5.66
5.31.	Basic minerals component of E horizons of profile SDM-4	5.66
5.32	Basic minerals component of Bt horizons of profile SDM-4	5.67
5.33.	Pedofeatures of Bt horizons of profile SDM-1	5.68
5.34.	Textural pedofeatures of profile SDM-2	5.68
5.35.	Ferriargilan and clay cutan of Bt horizon of profile SDM-3	5.69
6.1.	Distribution of particle sizes with depth of volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.7
6.2.	Bulk density and total porosity of volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.9
6.3.	Relationship between water retention at 1500 kPa and clay content of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.11
6.4.	Water retention with soil depth of the volcanic soils from Tawau-Semporna area, Sabah	6.13
6.5.	X-ray diffractogram of iron oxide nodules of profiles VLC-2	6.24
6.6.	X-ray diffractogram of sand fraction of profile VLC-1	6.24
6.7.	X-ray diffractogram of sand fraction of profile VLC-2	6.26
6.8.	X-ray diffractogram of sand fraction of profile VLC-3	6.27

Figure No		Page
6.9.	X-ray diffractogram of silt fraction of profile VLC-1	6.30
6.10.	X-ray diffractogram of silt fraction of profile VLC-2	6.31
6.11.	X-ray diffractogram of silt fraction of profile VLC-3	6.32
6.12.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction of profile VLC-1	6.35
6.13.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction of profile VLC-2	6.36
6.14.	X-ray diffractogram of clay fraction of profile VLC-3	6.37
6.15.	Formamide treatment of Bt2 and Bt4 horizons of profile VLC-3	6.38
6.16.	XRD diffractogram of clay fraction of Bt4 and C horizons of profile VLC-3 after Mg, Mg-glycol, K and K+550°C treatments	6.37
6.17.	SEM clod (at depth 50 cm) of profile VLC-3 showing poorly crystalline kaolinite	6.39
6.18.	SEM of clod from profile VLC-3 at 100 cm depth	6.40
6.19.	Microstructure of profile VLC-1	6.41
6.20.	Microstructure of profile VLC-2	6.42
6.21.	Microstructure of profile VLC-3	6.43
6.22.	Basic mineral component of profile VLC-1 (6.3x, XPL)	6.48
6.23.	Cristobalite in profile VLC-1	6.49
6.24.	Feldspar in Bt5 horizon of profile VLC-1 with strong blue pleochroism and also cleavages. (16x, XPL)	6.49
6.25.	Hypo-coating of Fe oxyhydrates along pores in Bo5 of profile VLC-2 (6.3x, XPL)	6.49
6.26.	(a) Iron oxide nodule with imbedded quartz in Bo5 horizon of profile VLC-2, (b) Vughs and iron oxides in Bo1 horizons of profile VLC-2 (6.3x, XPL)	6.50
6.27.	Nodules and droplet of iron oxide minerals in Bo1 horizon of profile VLC-2 (XPL)	6.50
6.28.	(a) Groundmass mainly dark grayish dotted/speckled b-fabric of profile VLC-3 (6.3x, XPL) (b) A close up of cristobalite (25x, XPL)	6.51
6.29.	Weatherable minerals in profile VLC-3	6.51
6.30.	Appearances of cristobalite (poly-crystalline quartz) on thin sections of profile VLC-3 (16x, XPL)	6.52
6.31.	Clay coating of profile VLC-1	6.53