

## Soil Management Day 2015 “Soil Health Day”

In the United Nations International Year of the Soil, the OMAFRA Soil Team partnered with Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario (IFAO) to deliver “Soil Health Day”. This soil management day was filled with hands-on sessions and a thought provoking key note speaker. The event allowed farmers, agribusiness personnel and other participants to view different aspects of soil; discuss management options and think outside the box at what is possible when it comes to cover crops, tillage, crop rotations and nutrient management.

Over 150 participants met at Hewitt Creek Farms at Innisfil near Barrie on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Dr Christine Jones, an internationally renowned groundcover and soils ecologist, and specializing in soil biochemistry, presented thought provoking information to help Ontario farmers restore the elements that bring new life back into soil. She distinguished the difference between carbon and building organic matter and challenged participants to improve oil structure, increase water retention capacity and create fertile ground.

The afternoon sessions allowed participants to “dig deeper” as they rotated between stations. They explored post wheat harvest cover crop mixtures; looked beneath the surface at the make-up of local soil profiles with soil pits; saw the impact of tillage system and soil cover on water infiltration and runoff using a rainfall simulator and discovered the challenges of managing manure on a dairy farm that practices no till cropping.

The Soil Management Workshop has been offered by the OMAFRA Soil Team for nearly fifteen years; each year in a different part of the province. The goal of the workshop is to provide practical and applied, hands-on training on the many aspects of soil that impact good crop production. The training helps participants to look beyond the crop and encourages the consideration of soil management issues.



*Cover crop mixtures offer a variety of benefits. Mixtures were profiled to initiate discussion of the benefits and challenges of different cover crop mixes*



*A soil pit allowed participants to explore the soil beneath their feet. A history lesson that demonstrated the physical and management events that forms a local agricultural soil.*

### Event Contact

OMAFRA Soil Team c/o Christine Brown [christine.brown1@ontario.ca](mailto:christine.brown1@ontario.ca)