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Oil Palm Growing Soils of the World¹

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It is clear that climate determines where oil palm is planted globally. Oil palm growing areas are confined to areas 8° north and south of the equator and in areas with good total monthly distribution of rainfall.

This paper outlines the climate, land and soil characteristics suitable for oil palm cultivation. The climate (temperature and rain fall) determines where oil palm can be grown. Oil palm is best planted on slopes less than 12° but should not be planted in areas with slopes in excess of 25°.

A survey of the soils found in the different oil palm growing areas is given in this paper. The importance of parent materials in determining soil physical and fertility characteristics is emphasized. Malaysia and Indonesia are by far the largest oil palm growing countries globally.

Most countries use or equate their oil palm soils in the USDA's Soil Taxonomy or the FAO/UNESCO Soil Map of the World Legend often modified for local use. Malaysia, in addition, has developed Keys to the Identification of their soils and grouped them into Management Groups.

Keywords: Oil palm, soil, world, growing.

