



FROM THE DESK OF RATTAN LAL
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Sub: **Soil: The Global Icon**

Fellow Soil Scientists,

Soil is the essence of all terrestrial life, and critical to the delivery of major ecosystem services for human wellbeing and nature conservancy. Yet, the term “soil” does not arouse the much deserved excitement or the “wow” moment among general public, civil societies, policy makers, and others. Indeed, the term “soil science” should be more awesome than the proverbial “rocket science” term. On the contrary, the term soil is prone to the MEGO (My Eyes Glaze Over) syndrome. Thus, there is a strong need for a global icon that symbolizes the importance of soil as the elixir of terrestrial life, provider of food, moderator of climate, filter and reservoir of renewable water, habitat for germplasm, inspiration for aesthetical and spiritual activities, source of pharmaceuticals and other materials, archive of planetary and human history, among others. As an example of an icon, the WWF has been extremely successful in using the panda as an iconic symbol. What iconic symbol can represent major ecosystem services of soil, while being simple and easy to be comprehended by the general public? Thus, identifying and promoting such a symbol would be a great leap forward. An imaginative option is that based on a statement by Carl Sagan, an American Astronomer (1934-1996).

*That's here. That's home.
That's us.*



*On it is everyone you love,
everyone you know, everyone
you ever heard of, every
human being whoever was,
lived out their lives.*

The Blue Pearl in the Space.

Sincerely,

Rattan Lal,
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