

2025 SOIL HEALTH MASTERCLASS PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY 27TH AUGUST – THURSDAY 28TH AUGUST

DAY 1 | 27TH AUGUST | 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

TIME	SESSION	SESSION OVERVIEW	PRESENTER
8:30 am – 9:00 am (30 mins)	Arrival - coffee and tea		All
9 am – 9:10 am (10 mins)	Welcome and introduction		Sophia Thach
9:10 am – 9:40 am (30 mins)	Participants' brief introduction		Stephanie Tabone
PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOIL HEALTH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SOIL BIOLOGY			
9:40 am – 10:10 am (30 mins)	INTERACTIVE THEORY: Soil biology in vegetable production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to soil biology in vegetable soils and its role in building healthy soils Key functions of soil biology and how it interacts with crops 	Doris Blaesing & Camilla Humphries
10:10 am – 10:25 am (15 mins)	INTERACTIVE THEORY: Soil physics and soil chemistry	Principles of soil chemistry and soil physics	Doris Blaesing & Camilla Humphries
10:25 am – 10:45 am (20 mins)	Q&A		Stephanie Tabone
10:45 am – 11:15 am (30 mins)	Morning tea		All
PART 2: MANAGING SOIL BIOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE VEGETABLE PRODUCTION			
11:15 am – 11:45 am (30 mins)	THEORY: Management practices to enhance soil biology	Management practices to enhance soil biology – What practices enhance soil biology, and which ones deplete it?	Kelvin Montagu
11:45 am – 12:00 pm (15 mins)	THEORY: Breakdown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant biomass Agrichemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing the breakdown of biomass Soil biology and agrichemicals 	Kelvin Montagu
12:00 pm – 12:20 pm (20 mins)	Q&A		Stephanie Tabone
12:20 pm - 1:20 pm (60 mins)	Lunch		All
1:20 pm – 2:20 pm (1 hour)	PANEL SESSION: Soil health from a grower's perspective		TBC
2:20 pm – 2:40 pm (30 mins)	Travel to demonstration site		All

PART 3: QUANTIFYING SOIL BIOLOGY, MONITORING AND INTERPRETATION			
2:40 pm – 3:30 pm (50 mins)	PRACTICAL: Tools and analytical methods for quantifying soil biology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of in-field tools for quantifying soil biology • What's available, how they work, and next steps. 	Camilla Humphries
PART 4: DEMONSTRATION SITE			
3:30 pm – 4:55 pm (85 mins)	SWICP demonstration site - Phil Bortolo farm visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of demo site and trial • Farm visit of SWICP demo site and the trial • Demo of farm machinery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Speed disc ○ Roller crimp ○ Strip till 	Stephanie Tabone, Kelvin Montagu & Phil Bortolo
4:55 – 5:00 pm	Reminder of day two		Sophia Thach
6:30 pm	Dinner		All

DAY 2: 28TH AUGUST | 8:15 AM – 2:15 PM

Time	Session	Description	Presenter
8:15 am – 8:30 am (15 mins)	Arrival - coffee and tea		All
8:30 am - 9:00 am (30 mins)	Review day one		Doris Blaesing
PART 5: NUTRIENT AVAILABILITY			
9:00 am – 9:30 am (30 mins)	THEORY: Nutrient availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil biology influences nutrient availability, with nitrogen serving as an example of how microbes add and remove nitrogen • Explore other nutrients and their interactions, such as phosphorus and mycorrhizal fungi 	Kelvin Montagu
9:30 am – 9:50 am (20 mins)	PRACTICAL: Nitrogen calculating and cycling	Managing organic sources of nitrogen through the use of cover crops	Camilla Humphries & Stephanie Tabone
9:50 am – 10:10 am (20 mins)	Q&A		Kelvin Montagu
PART 6: SOIL BIOLOGY IMPROVEMENT PLAN			
10:10 am – 10:20 am (10 mins)	PRACTICAL: Provide information about this activity - Management practices to enhance soil biology		Kelvin Montagu
10:20 am – 10:50 am (30 mins)	Morning tea		All

10:50 am – 11:35 am (45 mins)	PRACTICAL: Groups work on activity - Management practices to enhance soil biology	All
11:35 am – 12:35 pm (45-60 mins) * <i>*Dependent on the number of registrants</i>	PRACTICAL: Present on mini project	All
12:35 pm – 1:15 pm (40 mins)	Masterclass review, wrap up and feedback	Doris Blaesing and Kelvin Montagu
1:15 pm	Masterclass concludes	All
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm (60 mins)	Lunch	All

**Draft program, subject to change.*