

Abstract

Most large mounds in Uganda are built by termites of the genus *Macrotermes*. Except for those in valley bottoms they are composed of subsoil which is thought to be collected mainly from depths of 0.5 to 1.0 m, although the evidence is inconclusive. Mounds of both *M. bellicosus* and *M. subhyalinus* contain less sand than the subsoil when this is sandy, but only *M. subhyalinus* mounds contain less clay when the subsoil has a high clay content. In general both species tend to produce a stone-free topsoil whose physical properties are closer to a loam than the average subsoil. Mounds of both species in valley bottoms appear to be built from topsoil.

The amounts of organic matter, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus, and potassium in mounds were estimated together with their rates of turnover. In terms of the demands of two typical crop plants the quantities held in mounds and their rate of release to the surrounding topsoil were small. Only calcium was likely to be cycled in significant amounts.

It seems that termites only slightly affect the physical and chemical properties of Ugandan soils, even where mounds are comparatively abundant.