

## February 2016 Biological Farming Roundtable Notes

**What:** The Biological Farming Roundtable was held at the NutriSoil Production and Education Facility on Thursday the 25th of February.

**Why:** The aim of the Biological Farming Roundtable is to initiate discussion on biological farming, helping farmers, learn, share and apply this on farm.

**Who:** This Roundtable discussion was led by David Hardwick, Agricultural Ecologist. David delivered "A day in the life of soil" roleplay workshop, leading the group in an entertaining two hours on the importance of feeding and protecting microbes in the soil.



### What's to come for 2016?

**April 28th:** Focus Farmer Session - Learning from the Champions.

**June 30th:** Demystifying alternative products with David Hardwick.

**July 28th:** NutriSoil Open Day with Walter Jehne and David Hardwick.

**August 25th:** Nutrient Management with David Hardwick

**October 27th:** Focus Farmer Session - Learning from the Champions

### What we learnt.

Some of our key lessons included:

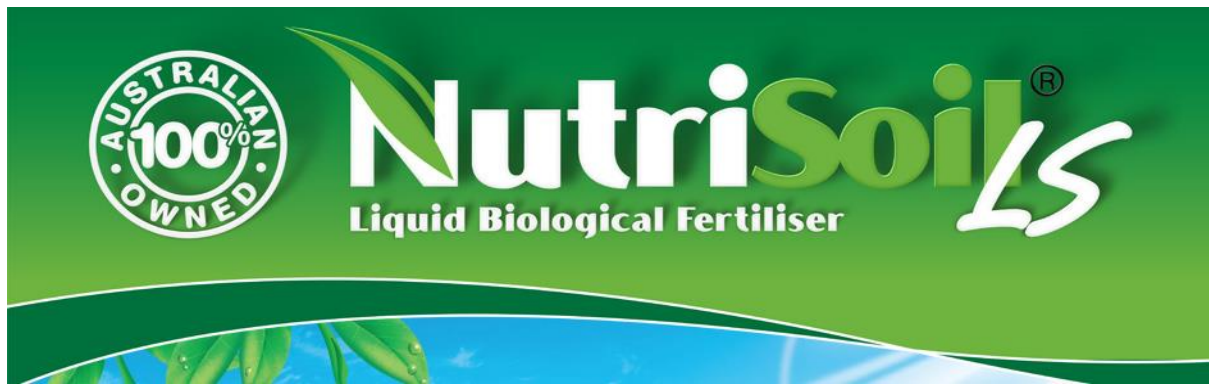
- Trillions of bacteria live at the root zone of plants, they live off the plant exudates created from photosynthesis.



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- Total nutrient reserves vary in different types of soils.
- Most phosphorus is tied up in the soil. The plant needs fungi and bacteria to make it plant available.
- Nature has two main tools: it uses acids to break apart minerals, and enzymes to break apart organic matter.e.g. Fungi spits acid on a rock to extract phosphorus returning it to the plant.
- Protozoa are like the engine room of the soil, they graze on bacteria and fungi excreting nutrients at the root zone in a plant available form.
- Earthworms excrete nutrients in the soil and create soil structure.
- The more abundance and diversity of microbes a soil has, the more organisms that are eating each other and excreting, driving the nutrient cycling process.



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