



Capillary Action

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Neuware - Capillary action, capillarity, capillary motion, or wicking refers to two phenomena: 1. The movement of liquids in thin tubes. 2. The flow of liquids through porous media, such as the flow of water through soil. A common apparatus used to demonstrate the first phenomenon is the capillary tube. When the lower end of a vertical glass tube is placed in a liquid such as water, a concave meniscus forms. Surface tension pulls the liquid column up until there is a sufficient mass of liquid for gravitational forces to overcome the intermolecular forces. The contact length (around the edge) between the top of the liquid column and the tube is proportional to the diameter of the tube, while the weight of the liquid column is proportional to the square of the tube's diameter, so a narrow tube will draw a liquid column higher than a wide tube. In hydrology, capillary action describes the attraction of water molecules to soil particles. Capillary action is responsible for moving groundwater from wet areas of the soil to dry areas. Differences in soil potential (m) drive capillary action in soil. 80...



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