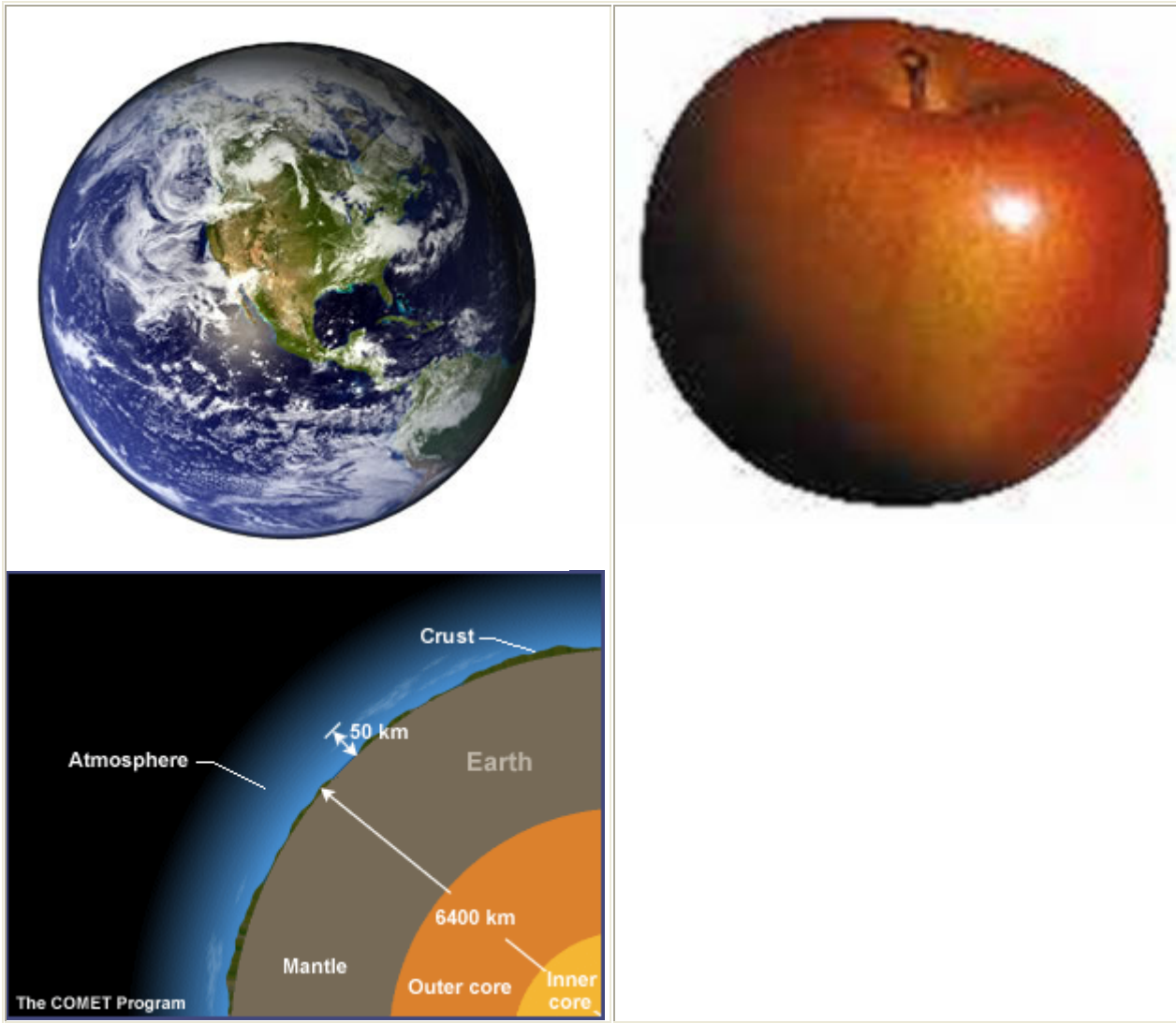


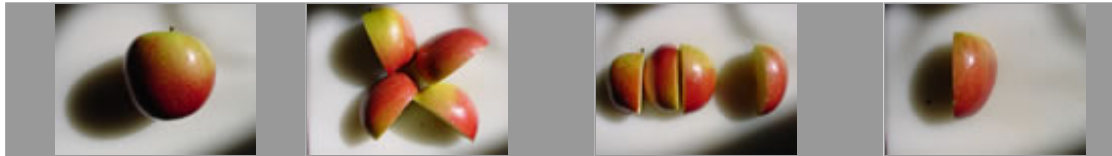
Comparing the Earth & Soil Availability to an Apple



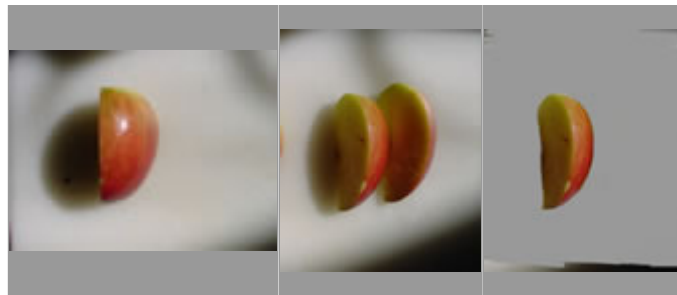
Suppose the Earth were the size of an apple, about 3 inches across. The biosphere, consisting of the ocean, land surface, and lower atmosphere in which all life exists, would be no thicker than the apple's skin.

OK, NOW IMAGINE THIS: if the Earth were the size of an apple....
(This exercise is based on a handout circulated by the non-governmental organization called Population Connection, 1400 16th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036;)

1. Think of the earth as an apple. Slice an apple into quarters and set aside three of the quarters. These three pieces represent the oceans of the world. The fourth quarter roughly represents the globe's total land area.



2. Slice this "land" in half. Set aside one of the pieces. The portion set aside represents the land area that is inhospitable to people (e.g., the polar areas, deserts, wetlands, very high or Rocky Mountains). The piece that is left is land where people live, but do not necessarily grow the foods needed for life.



3. Slice the 1/8 piece into four sections and set aside three of these. The 3/32 fraction set aside represent those areas too rocky, wet, cold, steep, infertile to actually produce food. They also contain the cities, suburban sprawl, highways, shopping centers, schools, parks, factories, parking lots, and other places where people live, but don't grow food.

4. Carefully peel the 1/32 slice of the apple. This tiny bit of peeling represents our arable land, the land upon which we depend for our food. Estimates suggest that we lose 25 billion tons of precious topsoil each year from erosion, yet we must feed an additional 71 million people each year on this diminishing resource.

