

VI. TASTE AND ODOR

In their action upon the senses a few minerals possess *taste*, and others under some circumstances give off *odor*.

444. Taste belongs only to soluble minerals. The different kinds of taste adopted for reference are as follows:

1. *Astringent*: the taste of vitriol.
2. *Sweetish astringent*: taste of alum.
3. *Saline*: taste of common salt.
4. *Alkaline*: taste of soda.
5. *Cooling*: taste of saltpeter.
6. *Bitter*: taste of Epsom salts.
7. *Sour*: taste of sulphuric acid.

445. Odor. — Excepting a few gaseous and soluble species, minerals in the dry unchanged state do not give off odor. By friction, moistening with the breath, and the elimination of some volatile ingredient by heat or acids, odors are sometimes obtained which are thus designated:

1. *Alliaceous*: the odor of garlic. Friction of arsenopyrite elicits this odor; it may also be obtained from arsenical compounds by means of heat.
2. *Horse-radish odor*: the odor of decaying horse-radish. This odor is strongly perceived when the ores of selenium are heated.
3. *Sulphurous*: friction elicits this odor from pyrite, and heat from many sulphides.
4. *Bituminous*: the odor of bitumen.
5. *Fetid*: the odor of sulphureted hydrogen or rotten eggs. It is elicited by friction from some varieties of quartz and limestone.
6. *Argillaceous*: the odor of moistened clay. It is obtained from serpentine and some allied minerals, after moistening them with the breath; others, as pyrargillite, afford it when heated.

446. Feel. — The FEEL is a character which is occasionally of some importance; it is said to be *smooth* (sepiolite), *greasy* (talc), *harsh*, or *meager*, etc. Some minerals, in consequence of their hygroscopic character, *adhere to the tongue* when brought in contact with it.