

DIG IT!

The Secrets of Soil



Beginner

THE EARTH'S SKIN



Look at your **skin**. You were born with it. Skin comes in different **colors**.

The earth has a skin too. It is made of many different soils. **Soil** is a lot like your skin. Your skin is a layer that protects your body. Soils protect and nurture the earth. Soil comes in different **colors**. It even looks different when it gets **old**...just like your skin does. Soils even have parents. Their parents are rocks and minerals that have been broken into tiny pieces to become soils!

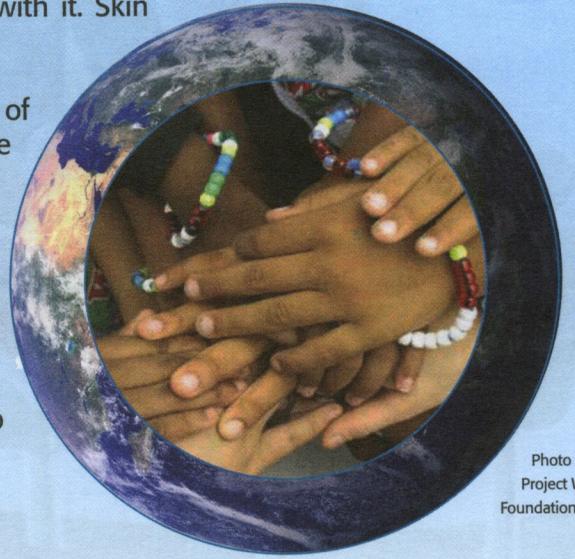


Photo by Project WET Foundation

Life in the Soil



Lots of critters are happy living in the soils. Soils are full of plant materials, minerals, water and air. Worms, insects and tiny microbes that are so small that we can't even see them are busy right now in the soil under your feet! Soils breathe, they have color, they change, and you use them every day.

Circle the name of the picture that is NOT a part of SOIL.



worm



bike



beetle



rocks



water

Find other things that use soil by filling in the missing letters.

Cross off the letters below after you have used them in the words below.

a i e e g r o o r t t



fl _ w _ r



_ abbi _



_ _ rden



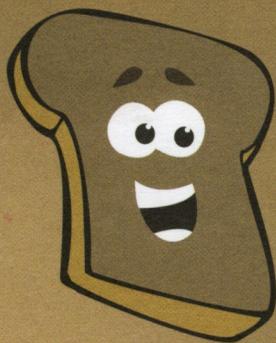
h _ us _



_ oo _ s



k _ ds



Soil for Breakfast?

Did you have toast or cereal or orange juice this morning? You couldn't have had breakfast if we didn't have soils! Most of the foods we eat are grown in **soils**. The grains for cereal and bread and the oranges for **orange** juice all grow in soils!

- Can you think of any foods you eat that are NOT grown in soil? Do you like milk? Dairy cows eat grass, hay and grain grown in soil and we drink the milk that comes from dairy cows!

All **day** long you use soil and don't even think about it.

- Last night you slept in a building built on soil.
- You drink **water** that flows through and is cleaned by soil.
- You breathe air that comes partly from **plants** growing in the soil.
- You play in fields, forests and parks that grow in soils.
- You even wear clothes made from plants that grow in the soil.

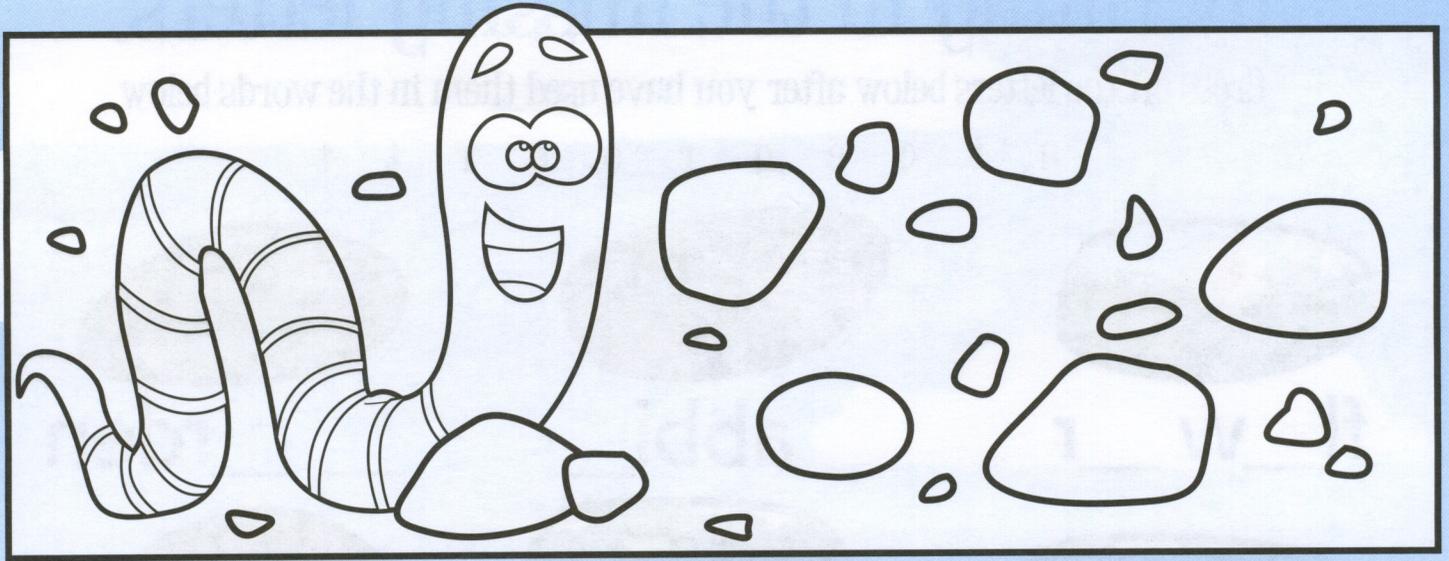
Did you know that blue jeans are made from cotton that grows in soil? You use soil in many ways.

Read the following sentences out loud!

I like soil.
Soils are good.
I see soils each day.

Forests grow on soils.
Food grows in soils.
Some soils are brown.
Some soils are red.
Soil has many colors.

WHAT COLORS DO YOU SEE IN THE SOIL?



Use the box above to show all the colors of soil!

Soil scientist Pat says, "Soils have rocks, minerals, water, living animals and organic matter like dead leaves." *Patrick Megonigal, a soil scientist who helped design Dig It! The Secrets of Soil exhibit.*



Ask Maxine

Q: What are some of the colors of soil?

A: There are many colors of soil. Sort of like your crayons! Soils can be various shades of brown, black, red, yellow, gray, or green and more!

Maxine is a 47-year employee of NACD.

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National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
<http://www.nacdnet.org>



Smithsonian Institution
<http://forces.si.edu/soils>



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<http://soils.org>

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Correlations to national standards, educators guide and answer key at <http://nacdn.net/education>

Booklet designed for use with grades K-1

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