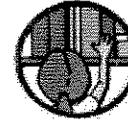




Home

Soil
ImportanceIncredible
JourneyAmazing
FactsFun
ActivitiesExplore
Your MindAdopt a
Soil CritterWant to
Know More?Kids'
Gallery

See Color/Feel Texture

Soil Colors

Soil can be many colors.

Take a small shovel and collect some soil from the surface and from about 6 to 12 inches below the surface. Ask your dad or mom where there's a good place to dig. Notice if the colors are the same or different.

Usually, the darker brown colors have more organic matter (rotted bits of leaves, pine needles, twigs, and other material from plants and other living things).

If the soil is red, that means it has lots of iron in it. If the soil is white, it may have calcium in it.

Now, look at the soil in another area. Try to find an area with different plants growing on it. Does it have the same color?

Soil Texture and Structure

Soil can have many different textures and structures. Texture means the size of the individual bits of minerals that make up the soil. Structure means how the individual bits of minerals join together to form larger clumps of soil.

Scoop up some soil that is not wet with a small shovel. Collect the soil in a place where it has not been walked on or driven on. Look at the soil close up and see if it forms small clumps (called granules or crumbs), small irregular blocky shapes, or thin plates.

Next, take a small handful of the soil and add a little water until it is moist throughout. You will need to work the water into the soil by making a soil ball with your fingers and flattening the ball and remaking it several times.

Now, rub the soil ball between your thumb and forefingers. Any gravel or larger size minerals don't count.

If the soil feels gritty, it has lots of sand in it.
If it feels smooth, it has lots of silt (medium-sized soil particles) in it.
If it feels real sticky, it has lots of clay in it.