SOIL STUDY

WATCH THE VIDEO

tinyurl.com/HOC104

Unleash your inner scientist and study the nature and properties of soil. If you're not lucky enough to have a flowerbed or window-box to study at this time, keep this activity for when we're allowed to visit a friend or relative's garden.

Takes: 30 mins +

Where? In garden

Who? Individual or as a family

What will you do?

1. Look at the soil up close
2. dirty hands test
3. layers in a jar test
4. worm test

You will need:

- soil sample
- jar
- water
- magnifying glass (optional)
- cardboard or tarp

Safety

Children should remain supervised throughout and wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.

Hampshire County Council

Hampshire Outdoor Centres

Tile Barn Outdoor Centre

Runway's End Outdoor Centre

The Hampshire & Cass Foundation Mountain Centre

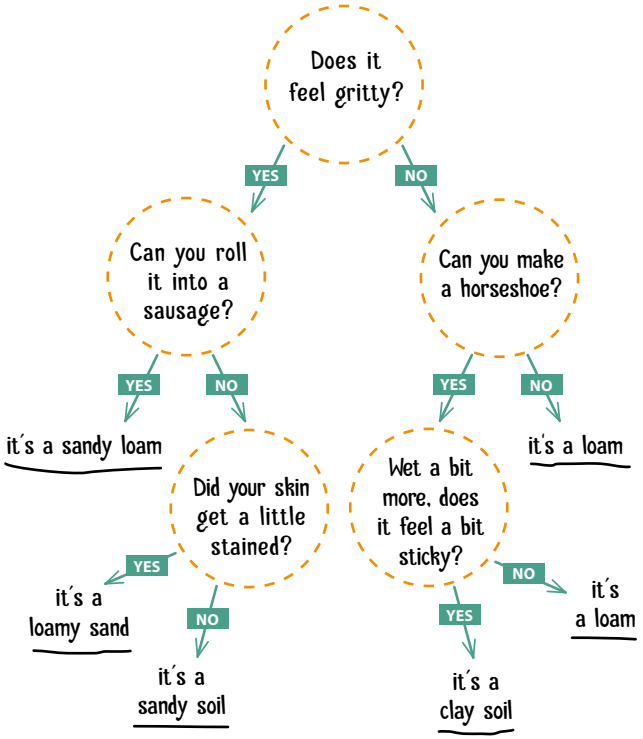
Calshot Activities Centre

1. Soil study

List as many components of soil as you can think of.
Use a trowel or sturdy spoon to dig out a small soil sample and place it into a clean glass jar. Make a note of what you see inside. If you have a magnifying glass study the soil up close.

2. Dirty hands test

Want to know what type of soil you have? Answer the questions below. The soil should feel a little damp before you start.



3. Layers in a jar test

Separate your soil sample into different layers, based on the size of particles.

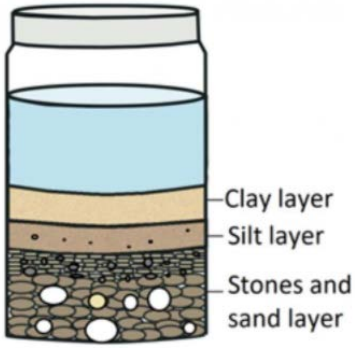
Fill a clear jar halfway with a soil sample.

Top up with water, leaving 1 inch of air at the top.

Put the lid on and shake to separate any clumps.

Leave on the side overnight and let the particles settle.

Observe the size of different layers.



4. Worm test

Ask if you can dig a hole 30cm by 30cm in your garden. Place the soil on a large piece of cardboard, tarp or dust sheet.

Sift through the soil with your hands as you carefully place it back into the hole, counting the earthworms as you go. Take care of those worms!

If you find more than ten worms, your soil is in pretty good shape. Less than that could mean that there is not enough organic matter or that your soil is too acidic or alkaline.

Review and reflection

Here are some questions to help you reflect on the activities. We use this kind of reflective exercise to get the most out of the activities at our centres.

What type of soil did you find?

Is there anything that surprised you?

Do you think it is good quality soil?

Why not give this a go with soil from somewhere different and compare the two soils?

www.hants.gov.uk/outdoors

Share what you find with us at **#outdoorcentresathome**

Sandy soil gritty to touch, you should feel individual sand grains when you rub your fingers through

Clay soil it is sticky when wet, when rolled between fingers will have a shiny finish

Loams a mixture of bits of clay, sand and soil