



## The Dig Pit

It can be tricky to spot wildlife in an educational setting but there is a whole world of life right under our feet. Getting muddy and exploring underground can be a learner's first real insight into how things in nature are interconnected. By interacting with soil learners begin to explore:

- plant anatomy
- rock formation
- soil make up
- living vs non-living things
- safe tool use
- changing states of matter
- Invertebrates (decomposers)

### Teaching time

Continuous provision station

### Learning outcomes

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter

### Step by step

#### Creating The Dig Pit

A dig pit can be created in a small space. It is best to find a non-concreted area and clearly mark the digging zone with rope to ensure children are aware of the boundaries. The learning will evolve with the dig pit over time. If your setting has no natural surfaces, you could use an old tyre and fill it with soil and rocks, this could also be achieved indoors with a tuff tray.

#### Mini beasts or decomposers

It is likely that children will find insects whilst digging, providing the opportunity to discuss their role as decomposers. For example, worms eat dead things and turn them into soil. Soil helps plants to grow, and plants help to create clean air for us to breathe. Posing 'I wonder' questions can support learners to discuss the importance of worms: 'I wonder what would happen if there were no worms?' 'I wonder if worms prefer dry or damp soil?' Remember to tell learners that it is safe to touch worms for a short period but to remain healthy and happy, they should largely remain wet and in the soil. Once learners have finished exploring the dig pit, they should be in the routine of washing their hands.

### Green Skills



### Suitable for

Early Years

### Location

Outdoors

### Season

Spring  
Summer  
Autumn  
Winter

### What you'll need

- Trowel
- Watering can
- Spade
- Toothbrush

### Key vocabulary

Decomposer

Soil

### Support and extension opportunities

#### I wonder statements

- I wonder how many layers there are?
- I wonder what the soil is made up off?
- I wonder what the insects eat?
- I wonder how old this rock is?

For more activities to support the Early Learning Goal Understanding The World, visit the corresponding webpage on the Nature Park website.



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