

## Soil creation station

Creating healthy soil is a fun and exploratory activity that can take learning in many directions. When thinking about caring for the planet and those that live on it, soil has a huge impact. Through enquiry, play and creating their own 'soil potion', learners can explore what soil is made up of and begin to understand the important role it plays in a healthy environment.

### Teaching time

Continuous provision station

### Learning outcomes

- listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions
- make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding
- hold conversation when engaged in back and forth exchanges with their teacher and peers
- participate in small group, class and one to one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary
- offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate
- express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher

### Step by step

Allow learners to touch, smell, and look at some soil before prompting them to think about and discuss what it is made up of. Most soils are a mixture of decomposed organic matter, insects, rock particles, water and air. Introduce the role of worms eating dead things in nature and turning them into healthy soil. Discuss what other things we might find in soil. Some possible answers from learners may include sand, clay, mud, leaves, bark, rocks, bugs, chalk, leaves, flowers, compost and water.

Introduce to the group that they will be working in pairs, choosing ingredients to make up their own soil mixture or 'potion'. Children will then plant seeds in their soil, and see which soil mixture is most successful at supporting the seed to grow.

In pairs, learners should discuss which items they would like in their soil potion. They will all begin with a container of compost. They can then add three other items to their potion.

Once the pair are happy with their soil potions, they can place them in a sunny spot and sow their seeds (see downloadable resources to support seed sowing).

Support learners to write a list of the ingredients that went into their pot and place it in front of their pots.

### Green Skills



### Suitable for

Early Years

### Location

Outdoors

### Season

Spring

### What you'll need

Peat-free compost (the base for your soil)

Other materials for children to make their own soil mix small rocks, sand, coconut coir, dried leaves and flowers, bark

Spray bottles of water

Recycled containers such as cups or pots to put their potions in

Easy to grow seeds, such as cress, sunflowers, beans, basil or marigolds

Handwashing facilities nearby

### Key vocabulary

Soil

Decomposer

Natural

Compost

### Support and extension opportunities

For more activities supporting the Communication and Language Early Learning Goal, see the Communication and Language overview page, or filter for resources by Subject.



### **Step by step (continued)**

Remind the learners to spray with a little water each day. Try to make sure the pots receive an equal amount of sun and water so that a fair test is carried out.

One week later, invite learners to compare the seed growth between the pots – which soil has helped the seeds to grow the best? Which hasn't? The soil creation station can remain open for learners to explore different elements and textures.



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