



Teacher Toolkit

Activity: Exploring Soil

Presented by: Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati

Grade Level(s) K- 1st grade

Activity Description

Investigate the soil in the garden and (if possible) compost habitat to observe and identify soil components based on physical characteristics. Collect and compare soil samples from different parts of the garden. Also add to the compost pile!



Ohio Standards Met

- Science, Kindergarten: Physical and behavioral traits of living things
- Science, Grade 1: Basic needs of living things

Instructions

- Introduction
 - Soil- what is it? Why is important? Are there living things in soil?
 - Break into three groups for each of the three activity stations (or do each station as a whole class).
- Station 1- Observe: Compost Sorting
 - Prep this station by placing a small amount of compost onto a tarp. Give each student a hand lens and popsicle stick.
 - Explain that students will be searching in compost for items that fit the descriptions of given sorting categories (such as leaves, roots, wood, etc.).
 - Ask the students to think about the changes that happen in the compost bin and hypothesize why these changes occur.

Thanks to Greater Cincinnati Environmental Educators (GCEE) for collecting activities for the Teacher Toolkit



Instructions (continued)

- Station 2- Explore: Soil Investigation
 - Ask students to point to the soil in the garden.
 - Dig a little bit of soil out of one of a planted flower or other plant bed and put it on a paper plate for the students to observe.
 - Dig a little bit of the soil out of the ground and put it on a paper plate for the students to observe.
 - Ask the students to compare the two samples, identifying differences and similarities.
- Station 3- Garden: Collecting Compost
 - Tell the students to look around the garden or items that have finished growing.
 - They can collect fallen leaves, brown plant parts, weeds, etc.
 - Instruct the students to add the plants to the compost pile.
- Conclusion
 - Ask students for ideas on how they can help the soil.

Materials Needed

- Station 1
 - Tarp
 - Hand lenses
 - Popsicle sticks
 - Compost
 - Sorting bins
- Station 2
 - Trowels
 - Paper plates
- Station 3
 - Plants ready to be composted (leaves, roots, weeds, etc.)
 - Compost pile

Thanks to Greater Cincinnati Environmental Educators (GCEE) for collecting activities for the Teacher Toolkit

