



## SUPER FAB LAB INVESTIGATION:

# Dirt Detectives



**Episode:** The Dirt on Dirt

**Cycle:** Backyard Science

### **Purpose** (What We're Going to Explore and Learn)

- What's the dirt on dirt? Do things live in dirt? What IS dirt anyway? In this investigation, we check out different kinds of dirt to explore these questions.
- We're going to compare and contrast dirt from different places. Is all soil the same?

### **Materials** (The Stuff We Need)

- Trays or plates (plastic or paper)
- Trowels or small shovels
- Dirt from different places
- Magnifying glasses (optional)

### **Procedure** (What to Do)

1. Give each child a tray and a trowel.
2. Let children know where it is ok to dig, then let them each get a sample of soil. If you are doing this with one child, get samples from multiple places. Be sure to remember where you found your dirt. You could also have children draw where they found their sample or write it down for them.
3. Ask children to describe their soil. What does it look like? How does it feel? Use the magnifying glasses to get a closer look.
4. Compare and contrast soil from different places. Does all soil look the same? Feel the same? Have the same things in it?
5. Don't forget to wash your hands when you are done observing the soil put on a pair of rubber gloves before beginning the experiment.

### **Other Stuff You Might Want to Know or Do**

- This activity lends itself well to very careful observation and description. Most soil is brown, but is it all the same shade of brown? Do all the little pieces that make up dirt look like they are the same thing? You could see bits of leaves, very small pebbles, and sand.
- Before you do the activity, you might want to predict what you will see and find when you observe soil. After the activity, check your predictions. Did you find anything you didn't expect?
- Through this activity we find that there's more in dirt than we might have imagined. Even though there are lots of great things in dirt, certain things don't belong there. You might want to use this activity to talk with children about our role in keeping the earth clean.

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