

# Soils Unit Teacher Masters:

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Dear Families,

Our class is beginning the Science Companion<sup>®</sup> Soils Unit. The Soils Unit builds on the natural curiosity children have about soils and encourages them to actively explore the properties associated with soils.

During the Soils Unit, the children will:

- Use their senses to observe and describe soil.
- Discover that soils contain many objects, including living and dead things.
- Compare soils to sand, pebbles, and organic materials.
- Use tools to examine soil and separate it into parts.
- Measure how quickly water drains through soil.
- Discuss the importance of earthworms for building healthy soil.

In addition to the work your child will do in class, you and your child can explore this rich topic together at home in the following ways:

- Visit the library and search for books about soils to read together and share with the class. There are book suggestions on the Science Companion web site. This web site also features a list of recommended web sites about soils. The address is:  
*www.ScienceCompanion.com/Links*
- Your child may also want to repeat and vary some of the activities we do in class, as well as explain what they discovered and learned. Try to encourage their independent experimentation at home.

Thinking and learning about the various materials in soils is fascinating for children and adults. We hope you will share some of your child's enthusiasm, thereby learning with them while helping them explore.

Sincerely,

# Collecting and Drying Soil at Home

Our class will soon be studying soil in science class.

Your child was selected to be a soil gatherer for the soil lessons that we will begin in the next couple of weeks. During this time, we ask that you and your child do the following:

- In the large re-sealable plastic bag provided, collect about 1 liter (1 qt) of soil (no more than 30 cm [1 ft] down from the surface). Try to find soil that is as natural as possible and hasn't been enhanced for gardening purposes.
- Spread the soil out in a thin layer on a sheet of wax paper or aluminum foil. Leave it in a warm, dry place for approximately one to two weeks to dry completely.
- Once it is completely dry, transfer it back into the gallon size re-sealable plastic bag for transportation to school.
- The night before the soil lessons begin, your child will bring home a reminder note about the soil collection. On this night, collect 500 ml (2 cups) of fresh soil with your child and place it into the second re-sealable plastic bag provided.
- Your soil gatherer should bring both the dried and fresh soil samples into class the next day for the beginning of the soil lessons.

Please plan to send the soil samples with your child on

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(requested date)

Thank you for your support,

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# Soil Gatherer Reminder Note

Your child was previously assigned as a soil gatherer for science class. On \_\_\_\_\_, the following materials should be brought to class:  
(requested date)

- 1 L (1 qt) of dried soil in the large re-sealable plastic bag that was provided.
- 500 ml (2 cups) of fresh soil in the second re-sealable plastic bag that was provided.

Thank you for your support,

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# Soil Gatherer Reminder Note

Your child was previously assigned as a soil gatherer for science class. On \_\_\_\_\_, the following materials should be brought to class:  
(requested date)

- 1 L (1 qt) of dried soil in the large re-sealable plastic bag that was provided.
- 500 ml (2 cups) of fresh soil in the second re-sealable plastic bag that was provided.

Thank you for your support,

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## Family Link with Science—Home Activity

### Scrumptious Soil

Our class is studying soil in science class.

With a family member, make an edible soil profile at home for dessert. You will need:

- 1 8½-inch plastic flowerpot (or similar container)
- Plastic flowers (optional)
- 1 garden trowel or spoon
- Lots of gummi worms
- 1 package chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed
- 1 8 oz package cream cheese
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 8 oz artificial whipping cream
- 1 large box of chocolate pudding
- 1 chocolate cake mix (baked, cooled, and crumbled up)

Layer 1: Spread crushed Oreo® cookies into the bottom of plastic flowerpot, reserving 1 cup for Layer 5.

Layer 2: Combine cream cheese, sugar, and artificial whipping cream. Mix and spread over Layer 1. “Plant” some flowers as you add layers.

Layer 3: Mix pudding with a little less milk than the directions require so the pudding is thicker. Spread over Layer 2.

Layer 4: Bake cake mix and allow to cool. Once cooled, crumble over Layer 3. Add gummi worms here.

Layer 5: Spread reserve cup of crushed Oreo® cookies over Layer 4, then top with more gummy worms and remaining flowers.

Serve this yummy “soil” with a clean garden trowel and enjoy!

This activity is optional.