



## SOIL MAKERS



### Red Flags

Find an outdoor area free from glass and other harmful objects. Wash hands after this activity.

### Questions to Ask

Prior to digging, ask the children what they think will be found in the soil. After discoveries are made, can they figure out why "the find" was in soil instead of somewhere else. How is soil made? What happens when soil gets wet? How do people use soil? What do the children want to do with it? While outside, where else would they like to look?

### Tips for Less Mess

If the soil is brought indoors, place newspaper around the area where children will be exploring. Place soil in a non-breakable, washable container.

### Science Connection

The animals you find might include earthworms, millipedes and isopods. These animals turn dead plants into soil by eating them—and then eliminating them. They are nature's recyclers.

### WHY

To explore some of the oldest animals on earth.

### WHAT YOU NEED

- Shovels or spoons
- Magnifying glasses

### WHAT TO DO

Find a safe outdoor spot where children can dig. Good places to look for little animals are under bushes, leaves and rocks. Using a digging implement, explore the area to see what can be found.

### VOCABULARY

**Isopods:** Common soil animals. People usually call them potato bugs or tomato bugs.

**Organic Matter:** Material found in soil that comes from something once living, such as a plant or an animal. Rocks are inorganic; they were never alive.

**Recycle:** To return something to useable form after it has been discarded or is no longer useful in its original form.

**Soil:** A mixture of loose material that covers most of the world's land.

### TRY THIS

*Draw pictures of what you have found. Be a zoologist and observe closely how worms move. Can you squeeze, stretch and move your body across the floor as worms do? Place a worm in a paper cup. Put your ear close to it and listen—what do you hear? Return the worm, or any animal you've found, to its home.*



Copyright © 2000 WXXI Public Broadcasting Council. All Rights Reserved.