How To – Make a Dirt Dessert!

The Veiled Landscape

Learn about the soil beneath your feet by using a variety of foods to represent the different soil layers. Have fun, dig deep and enjoy making edible soil!

Soil Science

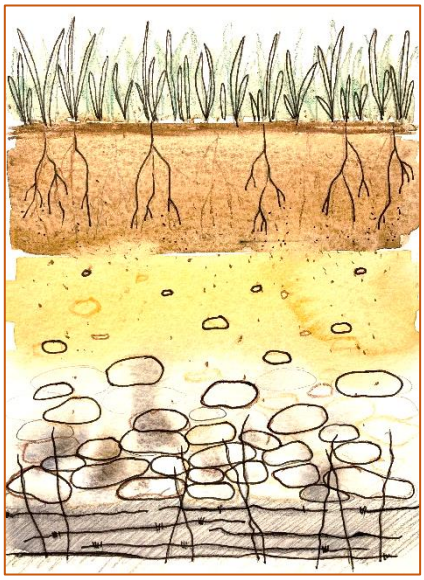
Soil is made up of many layers. Each soil layer, also called *soil horizons*, run parallel to the surface. If you slice a section of these layers, it is called the *soil profile*. We can separate the soil into 4 main horizons:

Organic Material – A layer of decomposing plant remains such as leaves and twigs.

Topsoil – Usually found in the top 5-10 inches, topsoil is the upper, outermost layer of soil. It contains the highest concentration of organic matter. Plants can grow and form roots here.

Subsoil - The layer of soil that is just below the surface soil but above the hard rock. It can be made up minerals such as clay, iron, silt or sand and is less fertile and lighter in colour than topsoil.

Bedrock – Several feet below the surface, bedrock is the hard, solid rock that lies at the bottom, beneath the loose surface materials. Nothing grows here.



Science that you can eat!

Dirt Dessert Recipe

You will need:

- A clear plastic cup or a clear container
- A spoon
- Chocolate chips, nuts or raisins
- Chocolate pudding, or red or yellow jelly
- Any chocolate cookies or biscuits
- Shredded coconut
- Green food colouring
- Jelly animals

Step 1: Place a solid biscuit layer at the bottom of your container to form the bedrock base.

Step 2: Add the chocolate chips, the nuts or the raisins (or a mixture of all 3), to create the remaining bedrock.

Step 3: Next, add the chocolate pudding or jelly. If you're using jelly, mix it up and pour over the chocolate chips to make the subsoil. You might have to leave the jelly in the fridge to set.

Step 4: Put 4 biscuits in a plastic bag, place in between a tea towel and crush by bashing with a rolling pin, or you can use a food processor to break them up into a fine sandy consistency. Place on top of the subsoil.

Step 5: In another cup, colour the coconut with a few drops of the green food colouring to make the organic material and place on top of the topsoil.

Step 6: Finish by adding your jelly animals...then eat dirt!

Modify the Activity

- Why not make other layered edible desserts by choosing different ingredients like a trifle or tiramisu? (One for the grownups!)
- You could add labels to each soil layer by using little post-it notes to help remind you what each horizon is called?

Fun Facts: Did you know…?

- Sandy soil can't hold as much water as clay soil
- It takes 500 years to form 1 inch of topsoil
- There are more microorganisms in a tablespoon of soil than there are people on earth

Be creative and have fun!

The Veiled Landscape

The Veiled Landscape project will help to better understand the archaeology of Sherwood through commissioning new LiDAR. LiDAR stands for light detecting and ranging and is a technique that uses laser scans of an area to create 3D models. The 3D models when combined with maps and aerial photography can help archaeologists to better spot potential archaeological features.

Once the LiDAR has been carried out, volunteers will be recruited to help identify potentially undiscovered archaeological features in the Sherwood landscape.

This project will also make use of soil dating techniques to help build a picture of what Sherwood may have looked like hundreds of years ago.

To find out more about the Miner2Major work with The Veiled Landscape visit:
https://miner2major.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/