Children learn to appreciate soil as a vital habitat that supports countless forms of life.

Soil's Magic 1



Keywords **school grounds • experiment • action for nature • rhyme • English**

1. Choose a special spot
Find a quiet corner of the school grounds, ideally somewhere the children don't often visit. Set up wide, shallow containers (like trays). Autumn is the perfect time, as there's a greater chance of rain.

2. Discovering soil
Gather the class and give them a small tray of dry soil to explore with their hands. Ask simple, open-ended questions:

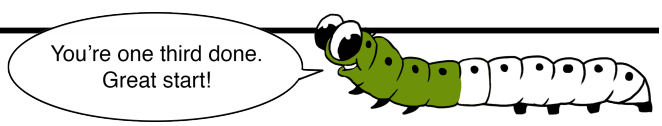
"What do you think this is? Where have you seen it before? What do you know about it?"

3. Introducing the "magic"
Tell the children that soil hides a kind of magic. Let them ask questions but keep it mysterious! Explain that you'll show them this magic and invite them to collect a little soil at home, just three handfuls in a paper bag are enough. Remind families not to use potting compost (it won't contain seeds). Children can use a small trowel or old spoon to gather soil on their walks.

4. Creating the Soil Magic boxes
When the children start bringing in their soil, take them to the special outdoor spot. Together, mix the soil into the containers. Turn it into a little ceremony: each time a child adds soil, say something like, "Come on soil, show us your magic!" Then, decorate the containers with labels that say Soil Magic. Try to complete this part within a week and save a little soil for a later experiment.

5. Waiting for the magic

Leave the containers for 2–3 weeks and hope for rain (or water them if needed). Keep the excitement alive by reminding the children about the soil's secret magic and asking what they think might happen. When wild plants begin to sprout, check the Soil Magic boxes with the children. Share in their wonder! If some expected bigger, more magical surprises, guide the discussion toward the real miracle:



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“How can plants appear when we only added soil?”

Celebrate the amazing life hidden in soil! End the session with a playful rhyme, which can be chanted or sung (to the tune of Pat-a-Cake):

English:
Magic soil, magic soil, peekaboo!
What are you, what’s inside you?
Plants grow from you, green and tall,
Some are big and some are small.

Maltese:
Fittex, fittex fil-ħamrija,
Minn fejn ġejja dil-maġija?
Tkabbar pjanti ċari w skuri,
Minnhom jiftħu ħafna fjuri.

Tip: check for the presence of woodlice as an additional wonder.

Send photos of

- ☐ Putting soil in containers
- ☐ Looking at sprouting wild plants and discussing

Resources & Equipment Needed

- Trays (e.g. old fruit/veg trays with holes);
- Dry soil;
- Paper bags (1 per child);
- Trowels (may be available from BirdLife Malta – contact dinjawahda@birdlifemalta.org);
- Pens/pencils and something to decorate the trays;
- Labels.

