

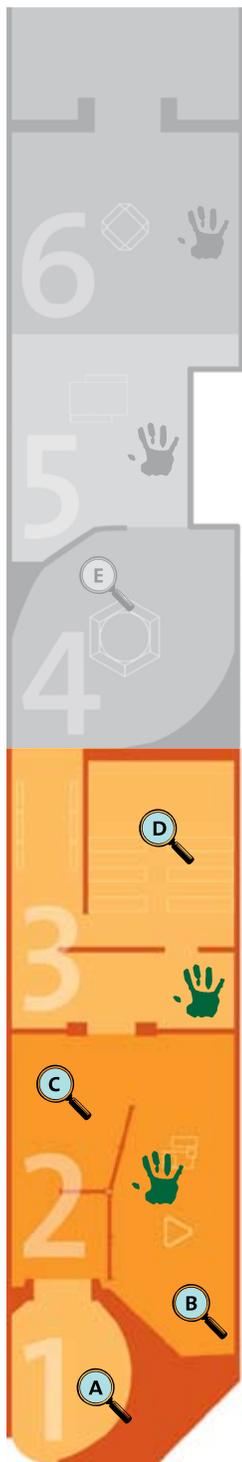
# DIG IT! *The Secrets of Soil*



Smithsonian  
National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Exhibition  
Open until January 2010

Entrance from  
Constitution Ave. stairs,  
2nd floor



Entrance from Rotunda,  
2nd floor

Come on down and discover the amazing world of soils!

## 1 THE SKIN OF THE EARTH

What on Earth are soils and why are they important to us? Find the answers to these questions, and uncover the dynamic roles soils play in supporting life on Earth.



### The Skin of the Earth

Get into the landscape. Look under the trunk of an oak tree at a cut-away mural and close-up videos to see and hear what's happening in soils.

## 3 MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

Soils are alive and teeming with millions of living things. Take a peek into the life, death and decay beneath your feet.



### Soil Emissions Inspection Station

Touch two modeled soils; then activate two soil "breathalyzers," and watch the simulation as they detect carbon dioxide emissions from soil microbes.



### Matters of Life and Death theater

Watch this edgy and gripping detective story that takes you into the underworld of life, death and decay in the soil food web.



Find fun hands-on and interactive activities for the whole family!



Make sure you see these before you leave the Dig It! exhibition

## 2 SIZING UP SOILS

See how a soil forms. Discover what various soils are made of and what gives them their special characteristics.



### Color It Wet or Dry

Study soils like a scientist by comparing six soil samples with Munsell color test cards.

### Where in the Soil World Are You?

Follow the clues to figure out where three mystery soils come from.

### Hidden Horizons

Touch the layers in a column of soil, and put together puzzle blocks to see how soils stack up.

### Texture Matters

Flip tumblers of "giant" soil particles to see how water moves through sand, silt or clay.



### Find Your Home Earth

Do you know the name of your state soil? Check it out in a gallery of 54 slices of real All-American soils. At the interactive Home Earth kiosk, meet scientists who study soils from the U.S. and even from Mars!



### Chef's Challenge

Watch as two wacky soil chefs, armed with a pantry full of environmental ingredients and 6,000 years, go head-to-head in a competition to "cook" up a unique soil.

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**4 THE BIG PICTURE**  
What do soils have to do with clean drinking water and climate change? Find out in this section, and unearth the roles soils play in Earth's processes.



**The Big Picture**  
Get soil savvy! Visit our global map to see the 12 basic types of soils found around the world. Then take our Big Picture computer quiz to learn about global connections between soils and life on Earth.

**5 WHAT'S SOIL GOT TO DO WITH IT?**  
How do soils affect where you live, work and play? What's *your* personal relationship to soils? Explore the many ways we use and benefit from soils and how we affect *their* health.



**Underneath It All**  
Touch models of two very different urban soils found in Washington, D.C.

**6 OUR WORLD, OUR SOIL**  
How close are you to soils? In this section, take steps to uncover the many ways soils touch your life every day.



**Soil Wisdom Worldwide**  
Touch a model of a dark earth Amazonian rainforest soil.



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## CONNECTIONS TO OTHER EXHIBITIONS

What did soils look like *before* they were soils?

Find out in the *Geology, Gems and Minerals Hall* on the 2nd floor!

Want to learn more about some of the countless animals that live in soils?

Check out the *Mammals Hall* on the 1st floor and the *Insect Zoo* on the 2nd floor to see how some critters "dig" soils.

Visit the Discovery Room on the 1st floor for more hands-on activities!

## FOR TEACHERS

Overarching exhibition themes:

- **Geology and Earth systems:** water cycle, carbon cycle, nutrient cycling
- **Environmental science:** general, local and international issues; biodegradation using soil microorganisms
- **Social studies:** land use and planning, agricultural issues, soil as a natural resource
- **Soil science:** classification, evaluation, composition and texture

Visit the exhibition website at <http://forces.si.edu/soils> for family activities, behind-the-scenes information, soils events and more!