



Investigate Your Soil



So what's living in your soil? Why not run an experiment to find out?

Get permission from the landowner first. Leave the hole with one sloping side, so that small animals that fall in can escape.

Choose a number of different locations. You might try a pasture field, where cattle and sheep have been. Another location might be an arable field, where crops have been grown. A clump from a poor, rough pasture field would be good. Try a clump from woodland too.

- It's a simple task. Just get a spade and dig out a clump of earth one spade wide on all four sides, and about one spade deep. Drop it into a plastic bag.



- Now take your clump of earth back to the classroom.



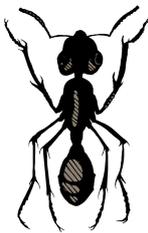
- Get a sieve (riddle). Now tease out the soil from the turf above, and sieve it.

- If you find any soil animals: insects, worms, grubs, etc., place them carefully in a container.



- When you have separated all of the soil, have a look at the animals you have found. List them.

- Count how many animals you have found in the sample.



- How does this compare to the other samples you have taken? Are there more animals in one type of soil or another?

- Why do you think there might be a difference?

- **Once you have finished counting and studying your animals, release them in a safe place, where they can find a home. Gently cover worms with a thin layer of soil or leaves – worms become paralysed in sunlight.**

- What have you learned?

