

Be a soil scientist



To grow successful crops healthy soil is very important. Soils are not all the same, even in the same field. Farmers need to know about the soil in their fields and how to look after it.

This **video** called 'Soil is Sensational' tells you more:

<http://www.farmingismagic.co.uk/films/soil-is-sensational/>

Try examining some soil.

What to do:

1. Dig a large spadeful of soil and spread it out on a plastic sheet or similar.
2. Carefully examine your soil. Do you see any roots (they can be very fine), bits of dead plants, stones, creatures?
3. Pick up a handful of soil – in it could be millions of tiny bacteria and fungi that you cannot see – in fact in a handful of really healthy soil there are more living things than people on the earth – wow!
4. Have you found any worms? Do they all look the same (there are many species of worms in our soils)? They do amazing work breaking up the soil and any plant material. Look in the hole your soil came out of. Can you see any worm channels? They help air, water and roots to travel through the soil.

<http://www.farmingismagic.co.uk/films/wonder-of-worms/>

5. Find out what kind of soil it is by doing the Gritty Sticky Test – pick up a small bit of soil. Rub it between your fingers, does it feel gritty or sticky? Put it to your ear, rub it again, can you hear it?

If it feels sticky and makes no noise, it is a clay soil, if it feels gritty and makes a noise it is a sandy soil. Most soils are somewhere in between!