

Name: _____

Date: _____

All About Soil

Did you know that soil covers most of the land surfaces on our planet? Look all around you. Soil is the base for farms, gardens, fields, forests, parks, and lawns. Soil can be very red, like the soil found in Prince Edward Island, or very black or brown, like the soil found in the Niagara Region.

How Air Helps Make Soil

Air helps to make soil when moving air or wind blows sand against rock and wears it slowly away. Little by little the rock becomes softer and slowly crumbles to become soil. This process takes thousands of years to form only a few centimetres of soil.

How Water Helps Make Soil

The weight of moving water can wear away a rock. Nearly all running water you see, such as streams or rivers, carry little bits of sand and gravel. Some soil is made when glaciers and ice grind and break loose rocks. Glaciers then carry these loose bits of rock until the glacier melts and deposits soil. Water splits and chips rocks by freezing and expanding. Rain wears away rocks and soaks decayed plants and animals into the soil.

How Animals Help Make Soil

When animals die, their bodies decay, adding important materials to the soil. Burrowing animals, like moles, rabbits, and groundhogs, help to mix the soil. The most important burrowing creature is the earthworm. Earthworm tunnels allow water and air to get into the hard soil. As earthworms travel through the soil in search of food, it produces waste that makes the soil more fertile.

How Plants Help Make Soil

By sending their roots through the soil, plants break it up, making soil better for growing. Even tiny roots are very strong and split apart big rocks. When plants die, plants decay, making soil more fertile. Plants also help to keep soil in place and not blow away.

Indicate if the following statements are true or false:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Soil founding Prince Edward Island is very black. | T | F |
| 2. Moving air blows sand against rock and wears it away. | T | F |
| 3. It takes just a few minutes to make soil. | T | F |
| 4. Running water carries bits of sand and gravel. | T | F |
| 5. It is impossible for water to break rocks. | T | F |
| 6. Tiny plant roots can split apart a rock. | T | F |

Fill in the blanks:

- Air helps to make soil when _____ or _____ blows sand against _____ and wears it slowly away.
- Water splits and ships rocks by _____ and _____.
- As earthworms travel through the soil in search of _____, they produce _____ that makes the soil more _____.
- Plants help _____ soil in _____ so it will not _____ away.

On G.O.O.S. paper make a series of true/false questions and fill in the blanks to quiz one of your classmates. When you are done, find someone to exchange with.