



# Grow-Your-Own at Home!

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## Week 1: I Love Soil!

### LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson covers the basics of what soil is made of, why it is important to care for and protect our soil, and how we can be good stewards of one of our most important resources.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn the three components that make up all soils: sand, silt, and clay.

Participants will understand that soil is living and is home to many soil organisms.

Participants will learn how to prepare their soil for the growing season.

Participants will identify one practice for keeping soil healthy.

### VOCABULARY

**soil** - a complex mixture of minerals, water, air, organic matter, and countless organisms that are the decaying remains of once-living things. Soil forms at the surface of land – it is the “skin of the earth.”

**dirt** - loose soil or earth

**sand** - a loose granular substance resulting from the erosion of siliceous and other rocks

**silt** - fine sand, clay, or other material carried by running water and deposited as a sediment

**clay** - fine-grained soil component that develops plasticity when wet

**loam** - soil with roughly equal portions of sand, silt, and clay; the ideal mixture

**humus** - the final decomposition of organic matter, is incredibly stable, and is amazing at retaining and transporting nutrients

**compost** - mixture of decayed organic matter that is used for fertilizing land

**organic matter** - material from decaying plants & animals

**arable** - suitable for growing crops

**mo<sup>o</sup>thí<sup>o</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a** - soil in the Umo<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup> language

**Umo<sup>o</sup>ho<sup>o</sup>** - Omaha tribe; “against the current”

**soil horizons** - the many layers that comprise soil, each with its own unique characteristics

### QUESTIONS

What are the three components of the ideal soil mixture?

How much of the earth’s soil is arable?

How many living organisms can be found in a thimble of soil?

What can you do to care for your soil?

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Have your soil tested at <https://midwestlabs.com/our-industries/agriculture/soil-testing/>

Order your own sand/silt/clay educational kit at <https://agclassroomstore.com>

### CALL TO ACTION

Dig down 6” into your soil and take a 1C sample. Put it in a jar with water and 1TBS of dishsoap. Shake vigorously and allow to settle for 24 hours. Observe and document your soil layers.

