Subscribe Today
Free Trial
Other Options
Subscriber Login

Search emagazine.com
Advanced Search

| HOME | LOGIN | SUBSCRIBE | BACK ISSUES | ADVERTISE | ABOUT US | CONTACT US | DONATE |

ENN Media Services — Public relations, multi-media, product expo, and more

EARTHTALK FOR YOUNG READERS

Print View Print View Without Graphics Mail to a Friend

Week of 11/21/2004
From Stacy Clark, Youth Editor of E/The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk, Young Readers: Our class is studying soil and why it is important. Can you explain how soil is actually made?

—*Dylan C., Gloucester, MA*

EARTH TALK YOUNG READERS
Questions & Answers About Our Environment

♦ Ask an Environmental Question

♦ Editors, bring EarthTalk Young Readers to your newspaper or website!

I was riding bikes with my son this weekend and we got mud all over our tires! A lot of mud—everywhere! When we got home and cleaned the bikes off, we noticed how many things were inside the mud. The mud, which traveled home with us from a riverbank, was full of grass and leaves and twigs in different stages of decomposition. It was pretty cool.

When the energy of the sun mixes with water and air, the "environment" that is created is one that naturally breaks grass, leaves, dead plants and dead insects down into their basic elements. These "ingredients" provide the organic components of soil, and contain nutrients that feed the seeds of new plants and trees. Earthworms also help make soil by converting the leaves and grass that they eat into the organic matter that they deposit while traveling through the ground.

Soil also contains minerals from rocks. These minerals are released when water and wind break rocks down into tiny, tiny pieces. Different regions of the world have different types of soil because rock types vary from one place to the next. Forest soils are dark brown with heavy concentrations of organic matter, whereas beach soils can be gray and sandy and have low concentrations of organic matter.

It's hard to believe, but it can take many hundreds of years to break down enough rock pieces and decaying matter to make just an inch of soil.

GOT AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION? Send it to: EARTH TALK for YOUNG READERS, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; submit your question at: www.emagazine.com; or e-mail us at: stacy@emagazine.com.

Editors, if you are interested in reprinting this article, please contact Featurewell / (212) 924-2283
For photocopy or other reuse requests please click this link: COPYRIGHT.COM PERMISSION REQUESTS ▶

FEELING THE HEAT — Dispatches From the Frontlines of Climate Change
A must read for anyone concerned about the future of the planet.

Shopping Cart and eCommerce Software by Volusion eCommerce Solutions.