

This activity, and more like it, can be found in 4-H Canada's **Steeped in Soil Activity Book**.

Learn more at 4-h-canada.ca/steepedinsoil


Dirt Dessert

Create a yummy treat to illustrate the different layers of soil, with this edible soil horizon profile! This is a great activity to do with younger members, so consider partnering with a Cloverbuds club in your area and do this activity together. Refer to the section on Soil Horizons, pg. 7 for more information.

Materials:

- Large clear glass punch bowl or casserole dish (or clear cups for members to make individual soil profiles)
- Examples of ingredients you could use for the different layers (feel free to use other ingredients!):
 - Whole chocolate cookies, shredded coconut, to represent the litter layer of Horizon O
 - Crushed chocolate cookies to represent Horizon A
 - Crushed graham crackers to represent Horizon B
 - Chocolate pudding to represent clay deposits
 - Rice Krispies, and chocolate 'rock' candy to represent Horizon C
 - Brownies, to represent Horizon R
 - Gummy worms, gummy insects

Instructions:

1. Start the activity by digging a hole outside to show members what the different soil horizons can look like. If that isn't possible, or to supplement what you see in the field, look at different soil profiles online ( **Example**).

2. Either working together around a punch bowl, or individually in clear cups, have members design their own soil horizon profile dessert.

Ask them:

- a. What will you use for bedrock?
- b. What will you use for the different layers of subsoil?
- c. What will you use for the top soil?
- d. Where might organisms like worms and insects live?

3. Build up the dessert, layer by layer, and look at the layers through the side of the bowl or cups.

4. With a spoon, dig into the dessert, all the way to the bottom layer. Serve, and enjoy all of these delicious layers of 'soil'!

Discussion:

- Challenge members to identify the different soil horizons in the dessert they've created.
- What would happen if before serving, you added milk to simulate rain?
- When you looked outside, or online, why did some of the different soil profiles look like? Why might they be different? What do soil profiles look like around the world?
- How might fun activities like this make people more interested in and aware of the importance of soil?

Brainstorm with your members what other kinds of things they could do that would help to encourage other people to care about soil.