

# School Garden Soil Type Testing



Get to know your soil types with your students with this simple lesson idea.

You will need:

- small garden trowels or spoons
- small jars
- water
- soils to test

Method:

1. Take several soil samples from different places in your garden by digging about 10cm down.
2. Place a small amount of the soil you find into the jar until it is about a quarter full.
2. Half fill the jar with water.
3. Shake the jar vigorously, making sure that all soil is loosened from the bottom.
4. Allow the particles to settle (this may take a couple of hours) and note the layers of materials that form.

1. Clay has the smallest particles and so it will sit at the top of your jar. If your soil has lots of clay, it will hold onto water and nutrients easily but may become hard when dry.
2. Silt has medium sized particles and so it will form the middle layer of your jar. If your soil has a lot of silt, it will also hold water very well and feel cool and sticky to touch.
3. Sand has the biggest particles of the three and so will form the bottom layer. If your soil has a lot of sand, it will drain very easily and seedlings may struggle to stay in place when you water them. Ideally, soil is a mix of all three ingredients. So, if you notice an imbalance, consider adding or mixing soils to help your garden along. Another option is to grow plants that like the type of soil you have.

