



Kids Corner!

DIRT GETS A BAD RAP

Dirt Gets a Bad Rap

By Diane Cleland, Ag Literacy Coordinator

Dirt: According to the Oxford Online Dictionary, it is defined as “a substance, such as mud or dust, that soils someone or something”. The definition is followed by synonyms like: grime, dust, muck, mud, filth. Words that do not conger up the best of images.

When I teach about soil in classrooms, the students always like to call soil by its nickname, dirt. I tell them that dirt gets a bad rap. Their parents are always telling them to not get dirty. Dirt is simply misplaced soil. Soil is the basis of all life on earth. Today many children are never exposed to the soil. They don't make mud pies or dig their toes into a mud puddle. They simply walk on soil every day, not knowing the importance of it in our world.

Soon farmers will start preparing the soil for the new planting season. There is no better smell than that of newly turned earth. Soil is made up of organic matter, water, air, minerals, and countless organisms. One tablespoon of healthy soil contains more organisms than people on earth!

This spring get your family outdoors. Plant flowers or a garden. Let the kids get their hands dirty. Let them run barefoot through the garden. Let them embrace the soil which is the basis of all our food and fiber.

For more family fun, check out this Soil Your Undies activity from the St. Louis Science Center. Bury a pair of cotton underwear and watch how it decomposes over the summer!

<https://www.slsc.org/soil-your-underwear-challenge/>