

Soil & Soul Lesson



Philosophy

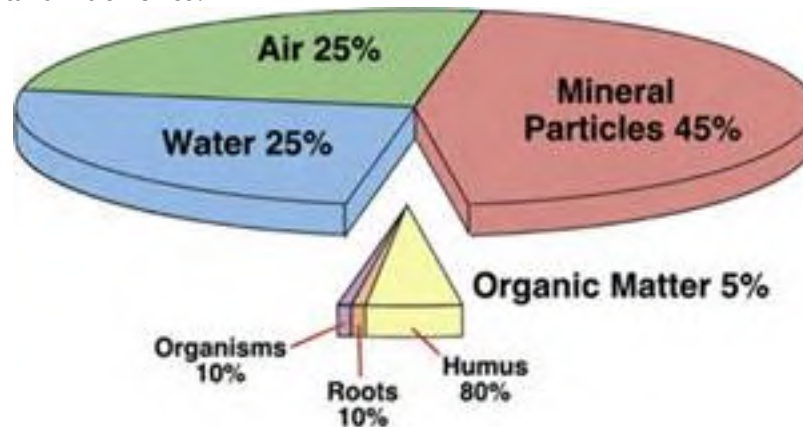
“When God coupled the earth with the breath of eternity, our souls and the soil were fused and our destinies intertwined for eternity.” * This reference to Genesis 2:7 is the foundation for the Soil & Souls lessons. We believe that when we reconnect the way we talk about God and the way we treat Mother Nature, we restore climate smart behaviors and strengthen community resilience. As our first school, Nature holds many lessons for character development and the sustainability of communities. The Bible serves as our source for talking about God, and the design science of permaculture is our source for regenerative earth practices.

Practices

Our soil time together is a joyful sacred time shared without electronics so we can hear the insects, birds, and plants interacting. Thus we begin with prayer. Please select someone to take notes during the demonstration so you will have the information for future use. Students are asked to reflect on their experience orally or in their journals as a closing activity. Pictures can be taken with permission, after the lesson is complete.

Soil Biology and Soil Building

Soil comes from different types of rocks. It then combines with other minerals, organic matter, gases, liquids, and organisms that work together support plant life. You can say that soil is a living community of beings- some you can see, some you can't. The beings you can't see are called microbes. Good soil holds water and nutrients for plants. When you disturb the soil too harshly you destroy the places for microbes to live. Making the microbes homeless compacts the soil and keeps the plants from being able to eat their nutrients. The best way to have healthy plants is to continuously build soil that is full of organic matter and nutrients.



Video on soil composition: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx2wVHeiTKE>

http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/mauisoil/c_nutrients.aspx and <http://www.thescienceofsoil.com/teacher-resources>

Main nutrients necessary in the soil

- Nitrogen (N)-strong leaf growth, dark green color.
- Phosphorous (P)- roots, early plant growth, seed formation.
- Potassium (K)- strong stalks, disease/stress resistance, flavor and color enhancement.

The other nutrients which are needed to build nutritious soil, can come from natural or chemical sources. There are many techniques for building nutritious soil and you must find the one using natural sources close to your growing site. One soil building technique is called lasagna soil because you layer different types of nutrients on top of each other. There are two main categories for these layers:

- 1) The carbon layer is usually brown and may include items such as dried leaves, dried lawn clippings, straw, pine needles, newspaper, cardboard
- 2) The nitrogen layer is usually green and may include items such as fresh lawn clippings, garden waste, food waste, fresh manure (chickens, horses, cows, rabbits)

When these items decompose, they leave fluffy soil full of beneficial worms and microbes. It is easy to remove weeds when the soil is fluffy. Observing rest cycles also keeps the soil fluffy and easy to work with.



SOUL COMPOSITION AND SOUL BUILDING

Your soul includes your thoughts, emotions, and personal history. It is said that your eyes and ears are windows to your soul so you must be careful what you watch and what you listen to. Just like we have to regularly weed the garden, we also have to weed out bad habits before they get a stronghold in our lifestyle. Nature does not tolerate a void or empty space. Matthew 12:43-45 Just as cover crops are used to keep good nutrients in the soil and keep out unruly/invasive plants; spiritual fruit is cultivated to keep out bad character traits. The fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 identifies a basis for good Christian character.

1. Identify circumstances or habits which inhibit your personal spiritual growth:

2. What will it take to get you from where you are to another level of spiritual maturity?

GROWTH SPURT QUESTIONS

Where in the 23rd chapter of Exodus does it say we should rest the soil every seven years?

Where in the 20th chapter of Exodus does it say we should rest ourselves every seven days?