

Soil Matters

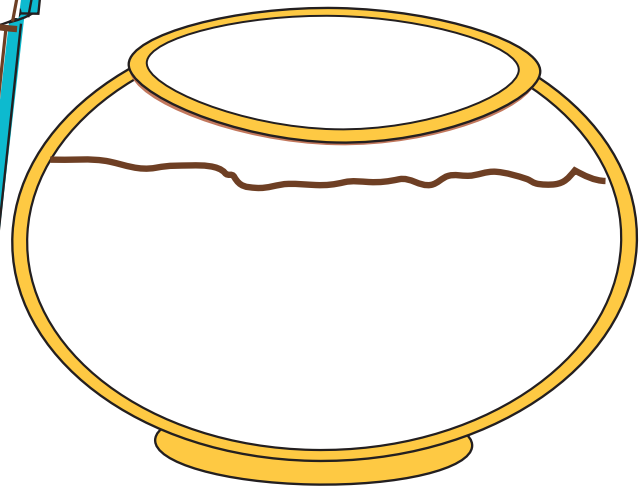
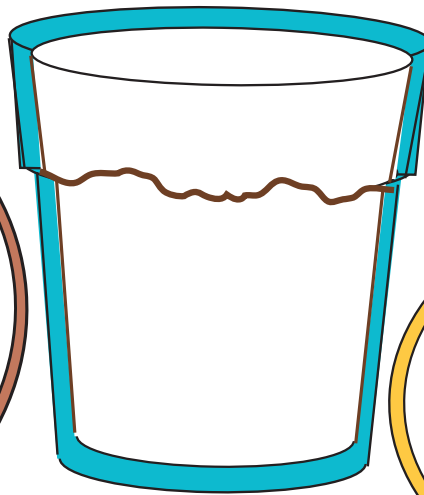
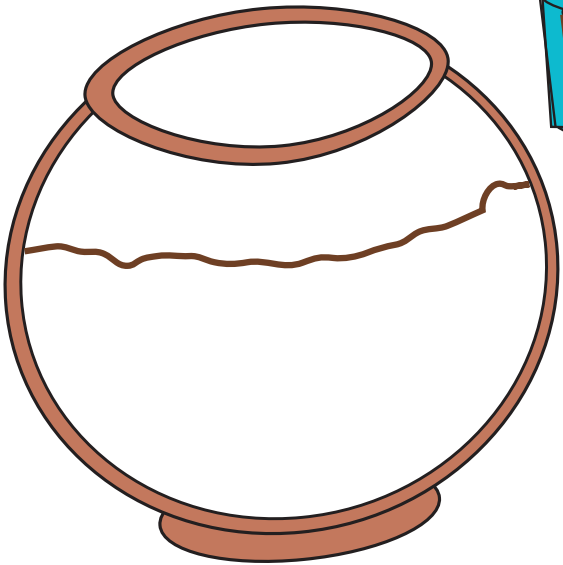
Explore Environments—Earth



RESPOND to the fact that there are several different types of soil, each able to nurture and sustain the plants that feed us and fill our atmosphere with oxygen. Consider why soil is important in sustaining life and how various types of soil differ. Research soil types to examine variations in color, texture, and composition. In what ways can people protect the soil from contamination and erosion?



CREATE sketches of several types of soil and some plants growing in them. How do roots spread downward in sandy, pebbly, or clay-like soil? Will your illustration include worms or bugs that are part of the soil ecosystem? Will decomposing organic items such as leaves, grass, and fallen fruit be part of the scene? What plants prefer each of the various types of soil you illustrated? Consider the reasons why cacti, orchids, potatoes, and tomatoes may have different soil preferences.



CONNECT the relationship between healthy plants and the people and wildlife that depend on them. Plants rely on soil for essential nutrients, and they thrive when their soil, sun, and water needs are met. Adding a compost mixture of organic matter such as fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, fallen leaves, and cut grass can make it more fertile and nutritious for plants.



PRESENT your sketch and explain what your research revealed about soil types. Why is it important to have a special day each year to learn more about soil?