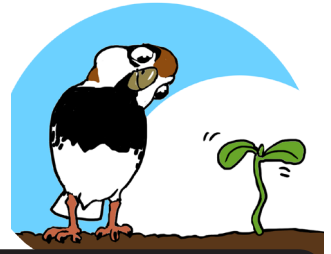




Children appreciate how special soil is for hosting life.



Nature's Magic 1



Keywords school grounds • experiment • action for nature • rhyme

- 1 Find an area in the school grounds, ideally somewhere the children don't see regularly. Set up some containers, ideally wide and shallow (e.g. trays). This activity is best done in autumn, when it is more likely to rain.
- 2 Explore soil with your class. Prepare a small tray with dry soil for the children to handle as you ask questions. Do they know what it is? What do they know about it? Where do they see it?
- 3 Tell the children that there is a kind of magic in soil. Let them question you but keep mysterious. Say you'll show them the magic, and invite them to bring a small bag of soil, three child fistfuls will do. Tell them to carry a paper bag and trowel or old spoon when out with their family and look out for soil.
- 4 Once the children start bringing the soil, take them to the special outdoor spot and let them mix the soil into containers. Every time a child drops soil into the container make a mini ceremony of it, saying something like, "Come on soil, do your magic!". With the children's help decorate the containers with labels saying *Soil Magic*. Try to do this over not more than a week. Keep some soil for another experiment in the third activity.
- 5 Leave the soil for 2–3 weeks and hope for rain (if it doesn't, water the containers). Remind the children about the soil magic, ask what they are expecting. Allow their imagination to roam. When wild plants start to sprout, grab your outdoor cushions and go check the *Soil Magic* boxes. See the children's reactions, if they had imagined big magical things, focus on wondering how the plants got there. "How are there plants when we only put soil?" Bring out how wonderful it is that soil holds so much life in it. Sit and extend discussion, link with topics that emerge, always sustaining sense of wonder and reverence. End with an easy rhyme that you can animate, e.g.

*Magic soil, magic soil, peekaboo!**
What are you, what's inside you?
Plants grow from you, green and tall,
Some are big and some are small.

Fittex, fittex fil-ħamrija,
Minn fejn ġejja dil-maġija?
Tkabbar pjanti ċari w skuri,
Minnhom jifthu ħafna fjuri.

*Can be sung to the tune of *Pat a Cake*

Use the Dinja Waħda Notice Board and tell the school about what you're doing.

Send photos of children

☐ putting soil in containers

☐ looking at sprouting wild plants and discussing.

