



Our soils are incredible!

They give us life, grow our food, and provide a home for billions of organisms. As **Food for Life**, it's no surprise that we think soil is pretty amazing! It is a lot more than mud.

Here are our 10 favourite facts about this incredible material:

- 1 95 percent of food production relies on the soil** – healthy topsoil is vital to our existence on this planet, but we are losing topsoil at an alarming rate - between 10 and 40 times faster than it's formed.
- 2 Yet only about 7.5 percent of the Earth's surface** provides the soil we rely on for food and farming.
- 3 Healthy soils have five different layers** (known as horizons) - beginning with **topsoil** and **organic matter** - like plant and animal residues - and ending with **bedrock**. Think of it like a cake. You can help your pupils learn more about soil layers by using our **soil activity sheet**.
- 4 Soils are home to a quarter of the Earth's species!** From the familiar Earthworms, to the lesser-known water bear and many still undiscovered species - learn more about the unsung heroes living right under our feet.
- 5 A quarter of a tablespoon of soil can be home to up to 10 billion organisms** - that's more than the number of people living on the planet!
- 6 Only about one percent of the microorganisms** found in soil have been identified so far.

7 Soils store more carbon than the atmosphere, and all of the world's plants and forests combined, which means that soil is one of our most important weapons in the fight against climate change! Did you know that the UK's soil alone holds nearly 10 billion tonnes of carbon? That's equivalent to the total global emissions created by the human population in one year!

8 Healthy soil can help to prevent floods and ease the effects of drought - soils can store one and a half Olympic swimming pools full of water per hectare. In total, the UK's soils store around 130 trillion litres of water - more than all UK lakes and rivers combined!

9 Earthworms are a real hero of healthy soils - Earthworms do amazing work in soils. Their hard work offers many benefits, from increased nutrient availability and better drainage, to creating a more stable soil structure.

10 Hundreds of animals rely on soil even where we might not realise it; animals shelter from weather under trees, birds collect sticks, leaves and grass for nests and many animals use trees to live in. Hedgerows and bushes provide homes to small mammals like rabbits, as well as food for birds, deer and sheep. Animals also need clean air and water to survive, and soil plays a vital role here too.

Our Soil Ambassador

Seven-year-old climate change artist, poet, and wildlife documentary maker, Aneeshwar Kunchala, is our Soil Ambassador and proves that you can be any age to save the planet.

“It's great to work with the Soil Association to help everyone learn more about our amazing soil and make a difference to this world. I hope these resources make soil exciting for you too so we can all become Soil Saviours.”



Why not use our resources for World Soil Day on 5th December?

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