

Treasures in the Dirt

Pull weeds to uncover tiny treasures in the soil, then carry the loose soil back to a tree and explore this little natural world together.

Helps Your Child Grow



Exploration and Discovery

Pulling, touching, and rubbing soil and plants helps your child notice features of different natural objects and become curious about the surroundings.



Fine Motor

Pulling grass, rubbing soil, and picking up small stones gives your child repeated practice grasping and manipulating natural objects with the hands.



What You'll Need

1. A child-size rake
2. a small shovel
3. a small bucket



Pull the Weeds

Visit a planted area where weeds can appropriately be removed. Point out which plants are flowers and which are weeds, then invite your child to pull one weed and place it in the small bucket. Let them feel the soil and plant as you work together.

Observations

- ○ Grasps the weeds with both hands and pulls them up firmly
- ○ Eagerly pulls at the weeds and explores the unfamiliar action

Tips

- Loosen the soil with the small rake first so the weeds are easier for your child to pull.
- The resistance and texture of uprooting a weed may be a new and interesting sensory experience for your child.
- A child who has just begun walking may still be unsteady while squatting and pulling. Support their body as needed to help them balance.
- Keep the explanation simple: “Weeds are little plants that grow where we don’t want them. Sometimes we pull them so the flowers have more room.”



What's in the Soil?

Do not throw the pulled weeds away yet. Place them on a clear patch of ground and look closely together. When your child notices soil clinging to the roots, they may want to touch and rub it. Follow their interest, then put the separated soil back into the bucket.

Observations

- ○ Explores by tapping a weed's roots and rubbing the soil between their fingers
- ○ Separates the grass from the soil and puts the soil into the bucket

Tips

- Soil clinging to the roots may hold tiny "treasures," such as pebbles, twigs, or even ants. Give your child time to look closely.
- Hands-on contact is part of this exploration. When the setting is appropriate, let your child investigate, then wash hands together after the activity.



Take the Soil Home

After exploring, carry the bucket of soil back to the trees or flowers. Encourage your child to walk there slowly, then use the small shovel to return the soil to the ground. A simple purpose can motivate a new walker to keep moving toward a clear destination.

Observations

- ○ Walks toward the tree while carrying the bucket
- ○ Scoops up soil with a small shovel and pours it beside a plant

Tips

- If your child is not yet sure how to use the shovel, demonstrate one scoop and pour, then invite them to try.
- If your child prefers to pour the soil straight from the bucket, let them complete the task in their own way.
- Carrying an object while walking toward a target is a real challenge for a new walker. Do not hurry them; follow their small, wobbly steps.