

Nurture in Nature 2023 - 2024

Getting our hands dirty

Topic overview	Dates	Resources
Dirt is Good – learning to love mud and mess, how this connects us to the natural world and why it's important.	Reception: Summer 1 Year 1: Autumn 2 Year 2: Spring 2 Year 3: Spring 1 Year 4: Autumn 1 Year 5: Spring 1 (Thu) Year 6: Summer 2	Clay Rolling pins Boards Sticks, pebbles, leaves Paper labels for models Trays to dry clay
Story / Game		Notes
Story The Ant and the Bear (Yr 4) The Green Man (for boggarts – recep & yr 3) How the hedgehog got his spikes – Yr 1 The Owl's Story - Yr 5		

Introduction
<p>The Owl's story – folk tale from Puerto Rico that explains why owls only come out at night.</p> <p>This week, we are exploring the idea that dirt is good! How many of you live in clean tidy houses, get told off if you wear your muddy shoes indoors, have artificial grass in your gardens, don't like to get your hands dirty??</p> <p>Well not here – here we embrace the mud and the dirt! It's such an important part of connecting to the natural world around us! Increasingly we live surrounded by unnatural materials – concrete, glass, plastic, artificial grass... The more we cover the world in these things, the more</p>

nature we lose and the more our world heats up! Dirt and mud are part of life, without it we would have no food, no trees, no oxygen. Sometimes we forget just how important it is and it can be seen as an inconvenience.

Older years – talk about impact of manmade materials on heat in cities – densely populated cities can be up to 12 degrees hotter than areas with more grass and woods, materials like concrete and tarmac absorb and retain the heat so it gets hotter and hotter. Artificial grass can reach absolutely boiling temperatures in summer too, and that reflects up and heats the air – it can also burn our feet (and those of animals!). Natural materials absorb the heat, and water too. When you walk home today, look at how many gardens are now covered in tarmac and plastic grass. This affects how much water can be absorbed as well, so that when it rains heavily we get more flooding – look at the ground next time it rains, where does the water settle and puddles form? Roads and paths? Grass and dirt?. The main reason people cover their gardens with these things is that they don't like the mess of mud, which is understandable. But mud is good! Mud is important!

We are going to do a little activity that I like to call “washing our hands in nature”. Usually you're told to wash the dirt off your hands – today, we are going to wash the clean off them. We will wander around the woods, finding different natural things to “wash” our hands with – leaves, water, mud, grass etc. Show how easy it is to rinse our hands in the bucket afterwards as some may be worried about this. (Remind to watch out for stingers, spikers, fungi and animal poop)

Yrs 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6: Now we are going to do an activity where we will be getting our hands dirty using a natural material – clay. Who knows where clay comes from?

**** NOTE – demo how to roll clay without it sticking to board for leaf print and owl activities****

Provide card examples of owls to show how to fold the clay.

Reception: mud boggarts

Year 1: clay hedgehogs

Year 2: clay leaf prints

Year 3: mud boggarts

Year 4: clay spiders and minibeasts

Year 5: clay owls

Year 6: clay leafprint bowls



Each item to be put into tray with name label underneath.

End of session – evaluation and feedback

Come together, what have we enjoyed? Is there anything we didn't like?