

The Living Soil

The living soil. What is soil exactly? Is it Dirt? Is it actually living? These are a few questions you might ask yourself when talking about soil. I did not understand at first how amazing soil is and you might not understand either. I am going to talk to you about what soil is, how it benefits us and what we can do to protect our soil.

What is soil? Soil is the loose, weathered material on earth's surface in which plants can grow. It takes one thousand years for half an inch of fertile soil to grow. In the United States only about 2% of our land can be used to grow great crops and 20-42% can grow crops but with good management and irrigation. As you can tell it takes a long time for soil to grow and how very little we have of it. Our soil can be taken away in just one hard rain. There are so many things that lives in our soil and that is why they call it living.

How does soil benefit us? Soil benefits us in many ways. From the food you eat to the clothes you are wearing. Having no soil would be very hard to live. Also do you like meat and chicken? Well for you to have that you need the grass for the cows and wheat for the chickens. All of this is grown with fertile soil. What are you wearing right now? Is it made of cotton? Cotton is grown in soil. Almost everything you eat or wear is grown in soil.

How can we protect our soil? There are so many ways we can protect our soil from eroding. One way is to put up walls in the direction of the wind so the wind does not blow the soil away. Also if there is a hill that runs water down your backyard you can put rocks in the way so the water does not go directly downward. This helps the soil stop and not get washed away as easily. You can even conserve soil in your backyard by making a compost pile. Worms are in that compost pile and are very important. They fertilize the soil to make it richer. Another way you can help is by putting mulch around plants like trees so their roots can be protected. You don't have to be a big farmer who uses contour plowing or crop rotation, you can start with your home. Every little bit of soil we save make a big difference.

I hope you understand a little bit more about soil, how it benefits us and how it's so important to protect the soil we have. I also hope you learned how amazing soil is.

~ Marcie Harward

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