

# Soil Art

**Overview:** Soil is beautiful! Soil can be found in a wide range of colors dependent on the parent materials from which it is made. People have been using soil to make art for as long as people have been making art (for pottery, paintings, to dye cloth, etc.). Explore soil art with your young gardeners by making your own paint from soil.



## Materials

- soil (if possible find samples in a diversity of colors)
- a surface to dry your soil
- tools to crush soil
- a sieve and/or panty hose to sift soil
- glue
- water
- cups and plates
- watercolor paper
- paintbrushes of any size

**Approximate Time to Complete:** 1 hour

**Location:** Indoor and outdoor

**Ages:** All ages

**Season:** Any season (although it may be difficult to collect frozen soil)

## Instructions

1. Artists have used soil to provide color and texture in their art for as long as people have been making art. Begin your soil art exploration by checking out examples of art made from soil created by the Cornell University Soil Health Lab at:

<http://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu/about/soil-painting-2/>

On this page you will also find a collection of great videos of the artists working on their masterpieces.

2. Gather soil samples from your yard or schoolyard. The amount you collect will be determined by the size and quantity of paintings you want to complete. Remove any large particles matter and soil life you find and return them to their home outdoors.

3. Dry soil completely on an old baking sheet or on plates. Once dry, crush the soil to make it as fine as possible. You can begin by using a large tool like hammer or mallet. Then follow that up by sorting it with a sieve or even use something like panty hose to get the smallest particles possible.

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4. Mix your soil with glue and water until you get a consistency that resembles paint or a runny paste (add just a little bit at a time so that it does not become too runny).

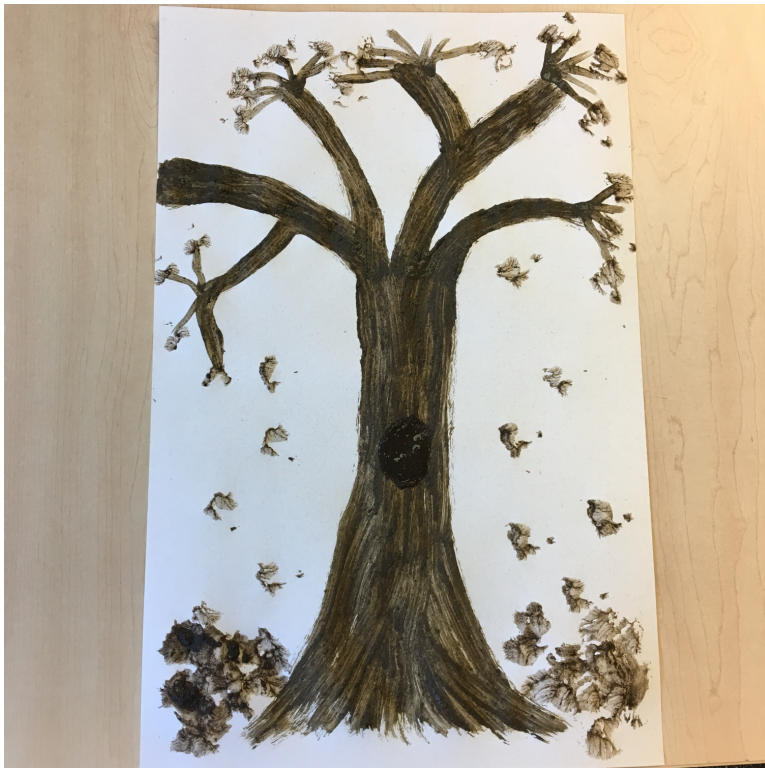
5. Let the painting begin! Watercolor paper works well for your earthy paint.

More details and tips about painting with soil can be found at:

[FAO's World Soil Day Soil Painting Competition](#)

[Social Science Society of America's Paint with Soil](#)

[USDA NRCS Painting with Soil](#)



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