

### 33. WHAT'S IN THAT AREA OF SAND?

**Overview:** So often we look without really seeing. This activity will provide a opportunity to look at that which we so often have walked past.

**Objective:** Students will investigate a plot of ground, record observations in a log, and make a report to the large group about their findings.

**Time needed:** 1 hour

**Group Size:** 2-4

**Age appropriateness:** 3rd Grade and up

**Site:** anywhere

**Background:** We all need to practice taking a closer look. This activity will encourage groups to focus in on a small area and see what they can discover. This method is used by archeologists.

**Materials:**

Provided at the Garden

Meter sticks or measuring tapes

Small shovels or spoons

Magnifying lenses

Tongue depressors or popsicle sticks

Provided by the classroom teacher

Paper and pencils

**Preparation:** Areas may be marked off prior to the class's arrival.

**Pre Activity:** Practice of this activity can be done by identifying an area in the classroom and have the class list what they see.

**Procedure:**

1. Measure off one square meter of soil.
2. Mark your plot of ground by outlining it with string and anchoring corners with tongue depressors.
3. Select a place to begin, perhaps at one corner.
4. Carefully examine and record all the things found including grass, weeds, insects, rocks, plants, etc.
5. Dig into the soil. Add anything new to the list.
6. Pick up a handful of soil. Feel it and describe it on your paper. Is it hard, soft, spongy, moist, or dry? Does it pack into a ball when you squeeze it, or does it remain loose? Is it sandy?
7. Try to find the names of some of the plants, animals and rocks on the list using encyclopedias, field guides or resource people.

**Modifications:** Make the area smaller for younger groups and have them draw what they see or enlist an older person to be a recorder for the group.

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**Extensions:** This is an activity which your students may take back to the schoolyard and make comparisons. They may also conduct this investigation at home. The same area may be observed several times over a period of time.

**Reference List:**

General Science Activities, Grades 3-12  
Environmental Activities Kit

**Time of Year:** any

**\*\*This activity was adapted from General Science Activities.**