# Exploration Table - Teacher's Notes

This section also lends itself to setting up an exploration table for students. Again, reinforce with the students that they should use all of their senses except taste and also that they should wash their hands with soap after touching things on the table. Any soil used should be as 'clean' as possible (don't use potting mix or soil containing animal manure).

The following are some suggestions for things to include on the table:

- Soil! Containers of soils, sand and sediments collected from different places so they are different in appearance. This may be sourced from gardens, hardware stores or landscape suppliers (see note above regarding soil safety).
- Glass jars or clear plastic containers of soil and water with tight fitting lids so the students can shake the jar, let it settle and observe the different layers that form. You may even like to add in some other objects like seeds or small pebbles (be careful the pebbles aren't large enough to break the jar when shaken).
- Magnifying glasses and open containers of soil for students to observe. Depending on how much room you have, you could also put some trays on the table so the students can tip the soil in and spread it out.
- Some plastic tweezers, pop sticks and spoons for the students to move the soils around. They may like to remove some of the twigs, seeds and other things that they can find in the soil so provide some small empty containers also.
- Funnels and different shapes and sizes of containers that students can fill with soil. Large plastic test tubes with lids (often called baby soda bottles or soda bottle preforms) are ideal.

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- Sieves and colanders so students can run soil through and separate out larger twigs, seeds and bark.
- Some paper and glue or sticky tape. Students could make some pictures by sticking some sand or soil onto the paper.
- Clear plastic cups of soil and jugs of water. Students can pour water onto the soil in the cup and observe how the water travels down through the soil. Perth soils can often be hydrophobic meaning that the water will not soak in easily or quickly. If you add some wetting crystals to some of the soil, students can observe the difference in the speed that the water absorbs.
- Plants in pots for students to observe over time.
- Artificial worms and other insects in some soil for students to find. You could use plastic toys or even cooked spaghetti! If you use cooked spaghetti it will encourage students to be gentle, like they need to be with real worms, as the pasta will break if squeezed or pulled.