



Soils are great! - Public engagement project with primary school children

Emilia Urbanek

Swansea University, Geography, Swansea, United Kingdom (e.urbanek@swansea.ac.uk)

Children love playing with 'dirt' but currently playing with 'mud' seems a bit out of fashion and children are often discouraged to touch the soil. I would like to break this barrier, get them involved in hands on activities, and show them that playing with soil is fun, exciting and educational.

I will report on the public engagement project for primary school kids aiming to raise the awareness of importance of the soil and their different functions. The project is based on several visits to a local primary school and get involved in so-called 'Genius club' where mixed age pupils do curiosity led activities e.g. science, engineers, eco club.

The project has two phases. First, are the classroom activities exploring different soil types, textures, water holding and plant growth experiments. Based on the experiments from the first phase of the project, children will design a small garden in the school outdoor space and plant the vegetation of their choice. The last part of the project will involve monitoring the weather conditions and the effect of rainfall and sun exposure on soil water conditions, soil temperature, photosynthesis and plant growth.