

# BACK TO NATURE



## Magnificent Mud

### Getting down with dirt!

When the ground around us gets wet, it can turn into a messy mixture of soil and water that we call mud.



There are different kinds of mud depending on what kind of soil the water is mixed with. It can be slimy, stinky, rocky, sandy, moldable like clay, and everything in between. All mud is made of minerals, water, air, and organic matter. We can use mud to build and create. Clay pots, dishes, bricks and entire houses can be made of mud.



**Dirt** is dead. **Soil** is alive with organisms and nutrients. Check out this [infographic](#) to learn more about the secrets of good soil.

### What makes for good mud?

Despite its reputation, mud can be good for you! A healthy patch of mud will have a pleasant earthy smell and be full of life. Small insects, bacteria, and especially worms are all good signs that you have good soil. These are called **decomposers** and they help break down nutrients so plants can grow. You can read more about them [here](#).



It's important to have healthy soil so that farmers can grow their crops, animals have somewhere to live, and



even help clean our water sources. You can even buy mud to put on your skin to moisturize and replenish nutrients.

### Go Outside

Grab your nature journal and walk around your house. Do you see more soil (teaming with life) or dirt (dead)?

After the next rainstorm go outside and make some observations in nearby mud puddles.



Is the mud different colors in different places?  
How does the mud feel?  
Did you find any decomposers? If so, what kind?  
Take notes about what you see.

June 29 is [International Mud Day](#) so get outside, get messy, and share any pictures of your findings using the hashtags:  
**#casbacktonature #casnatureplay**

### Making Mud Pies

Time to get down and dirty with the mud around you. Head outside and prepare to create some mud pies (not edible). Here's what you will need:



- Several different kinds of soil.
- Bowls or buckets.
- Stirring tools.
- A flat sunny surface.

Gather a few different kinds of dirt. For example, some sandy, some rocky, some with plants, etc. Separate each type into their own container and mix in some water. Just enough to make it moldable but not too wet. Spread out your mud on a flat surface out in the sunlight. Feel free to use molds to make shapes and see how the different kinds of mud dry. Grab a notebook and make some observations.

Does one take longer to dry?  
Do they all look the same?  
Can you pick up the dried mud?  
Do any have a smell?



For more ideas of how to play/experiment with mud click [here!](#)

