DR. DIRT'S SOIL TESTS ANYONE CAN DO AT HOME · TEST 3 OF 11

The Slake Test

Is your soil glued together by life?



Time: 10 minutes (dry the clumps the day before)

Kids and grown-ups together

You will need

- ☐ Two clumps of soil about the size of a grape: one from a garden bed or under mulch, one from a bare path
- ☐ Two clear glasses of water
- ☐ Two forks, or two pieces of window screen

Try it

1. Let both clumps dry on a plate for a day.
2. Set each clump on a fork (or screen) and lower it gently into its glass, just under the water.
3. Watch for 5 minutes. Don't touch!
4. Then lift each one gently up and down a few times.

What it means

Holds together

Roots, fungus threads and the sticky stuff soil life makes glue the crumbs. Rain soaks in instead of washing soil away.

Falls into a muddy cloud

Not much glue. This soil needs living roots, mulch, compost and less digging.

Little bubbles

Air coming out of the spaces in the soil. That's normal.

***Wonder**: Which clump held together longer? What was growing where it came from?*

My result