DR. DIRT'S SOIL TESTS ANYONE CAN DO AT HOME · TEST 6 OF 11

The Earthworm Count

How many worms live in one shovel of your soil?



Time: 20 minutes | Kids and grown-ups together

You will need

- ☐ A shovel
- ☐ A tarp or an old sheet
- ☐ A ruler

Try it

1. Pick a cool morning when the soil is moist.
2. Dig out a block of soil about 1 foot (30 cm) wide, long and deep. Set it on the tarp.
3. Break it apart gently with your hands and count every earthworm.
4. Put the soil and the worms back in the hole.

What it means

10 or more
Great! Plenty of food, air and water for soil life.

5 to 10
Good.

Fewer than 5
The soil may be too dry, packed down, low in organic matter, or dug or sprayed lately.

Good to know: Worms go deep when it's hot or dry. A low count on a dry day may not be the whole story. Try again after rain.

Safety: Wash your hands after.

Wonder: *Where do you think the worms go when the soil dries out?*

My result