

THE DAY THE Soil Went Missing



Fairfax Public School



Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

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The day the Soil Went Missing

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One day the Fairfax students came to school on what they thought would be an ordinary school day. Everything was fine when they were working in the classroom, but when they went down to the garden something was wrong, something was missing... the most important part of the garden was gone!



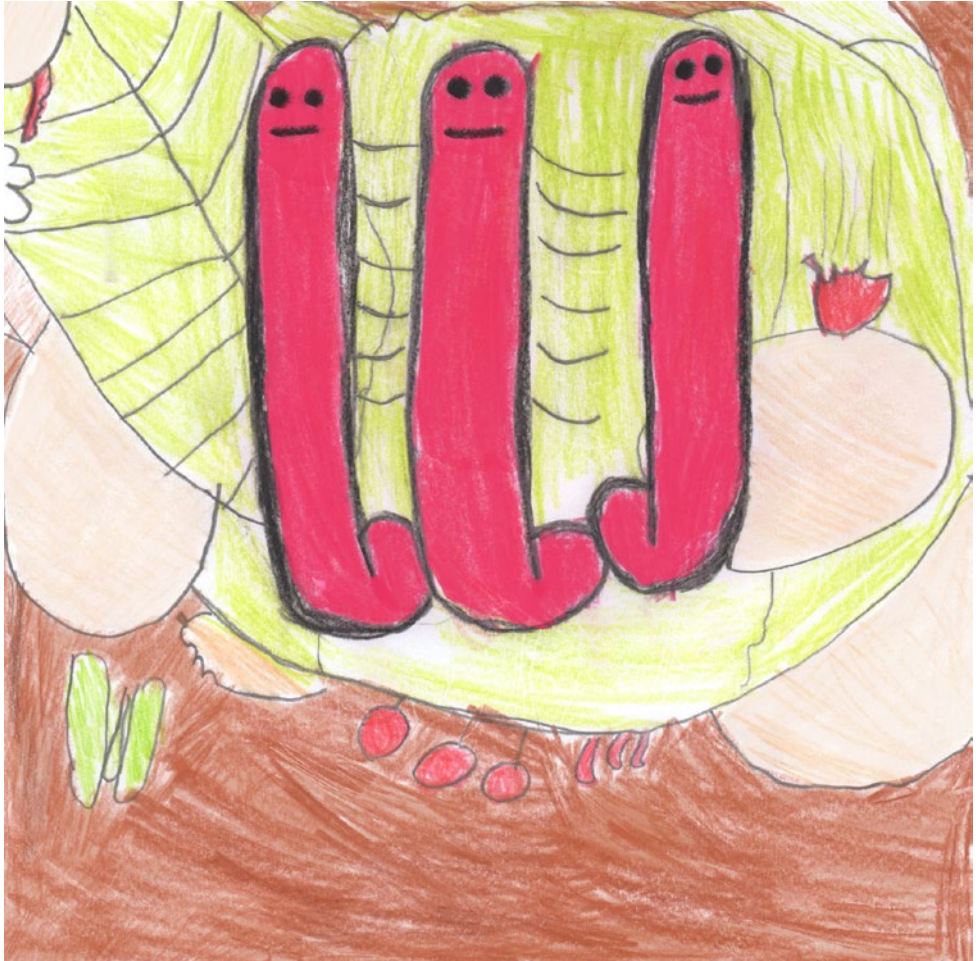
Something or someone had stolen all of the soil from the veggie garden. First they thought that maybe the rain had washed it all away, but the ground was dry, very dry.

The students had no idea where the soil could have disappeared to, so they decided to investigate. They went to see Professor Worm.



The thing to remember about Professor Worm is that he is always digging in the soil in the veggie patch and that he is not a girl or a boy. The students found him in the compost bin, chowing down on a rotten tomato.





The students questioned Professor Worm about the soil disappearance. He denied any knowledge of the crime.

The students were suspicious, because they know worms live in the soil. They need the soil, it is important to them.

He suggested asking Mr. Caterpillar.

The thing to remember about Mr. Caterpillar is that he is a very big pest in the garden. Mr. Caterpillar and his rather large family are always nibbling and munching on the fresh veggies and leaves in the Fairfax veggie patch.





The students were suspicious of Mr. Caterpillar. He is a pest after all!

“I don’t know anything about the missing soil,” Mr. Caterpillar said. “But I did hear a noise and right after I saw the terrible termites marching in a line straight towards the wooden garden beds in the veggie patch.”

The students went off to find the terrible termites.

The thing to remember about the termites is that they don't really care about anything else apart from themselves and they are always very hungry.

Everyone knows that they are prime suspects. Termites use up lots of soil to create their termite mounds, sometimes as tall as a tree.





The Fairfax students looked into the termite tunnels and tried to talk to the terrible termites, but they were way too busy to talk, rushing around and chewing on something that looked like wood panels. The students decided to go and spot Darleen the Dung Beetle. She might have some answers.

The thing to remember about Darleen is that she eats way too much dung and always lies. She takes nutrients out of the dung to lay her eggs, but she helps improve the soil by bringing subsoil to the surface and aerating the ground. Surely she would know what happened to the soil.





“Darleen, do you have any idea where the soil went to?” asked the students.

“Yes, of course,” said Darleen putting down a huge ball of dung.

“Are you sure?” they asked again.

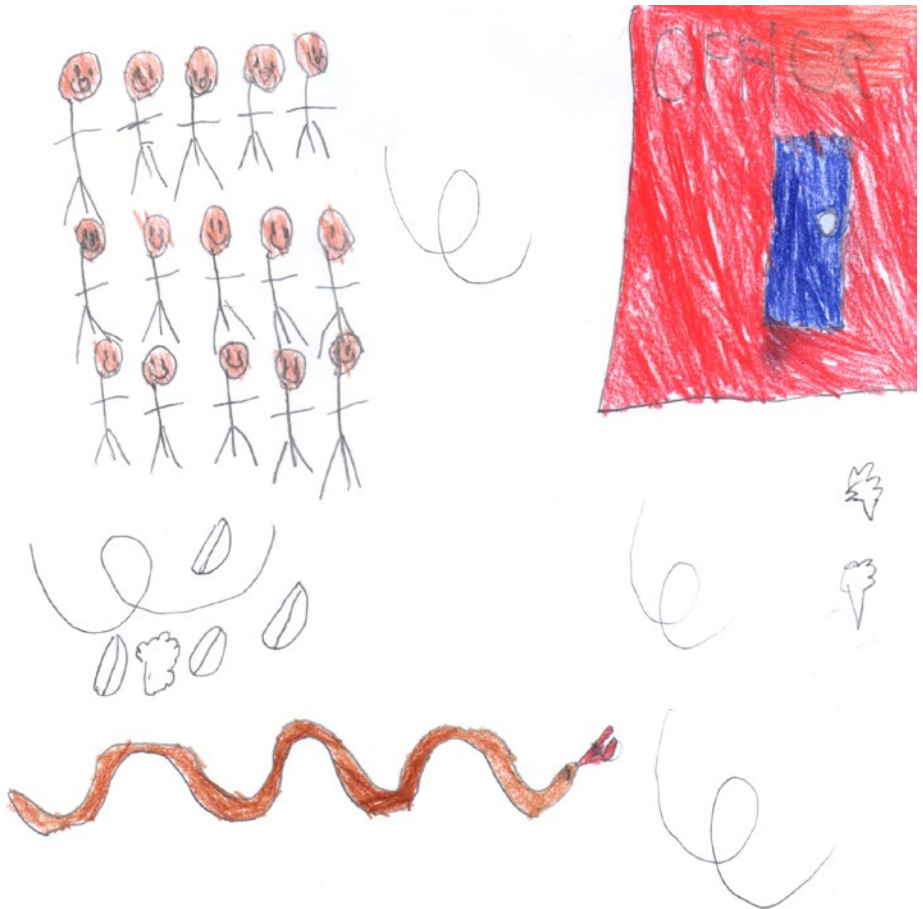
“OK fine, I was just babbling. No, I haven’t seen anything,” she replied. “Mr. Evil Snake is always hanging out near the garden, go ask him.”

“Alright everyone, we are off to see Mr. Evil Snake so stay close.”

The thing to remember about Mr. Evil Snake is that he is a trickster. We found him under the Fairfax office.

“Where were you when the soil went missing?”

“I stole the soil, it’s all mine.” He chuckled wickedly,
“No, I didn’t really, just tricking you. I haven’t seen anything but I’m sure Mr. Sharp Eyes the spider has some answers. He sees everything.”





The thing to remember about Mr. Sharp Eyes is that he is a dangerous trapdoor spider. Trapdoors are clever, they make the door to their hole invisible so that birds don't eat them. When the students eventually found him they asked him about the soil.

He opened his door a little, "I heard something but couldn't see a thing. Try my neighbour, April the witchetty grub," he snapped and closed his trapdoor.

The thing to remember about April the Witchetty grub is that she LOVES her soil home.

“What do you know about the soil disappearing?” asked the students.

“I didn’t seen anything, but I’m sure I heard a noise.”

“Thanks April,” they replied.

The students turned to each other and pondered, “She is a suspect and she loves the soil, especially for burrowing in.”

All the garden creatures had been questioned, so now it was time to work out who, or what, had stolen the soil.





The students put their heads together. They'd been learning about soil and how important it is for the veggie patch creatures. So, they were the most unlikely suspects but they all said they heard a noise.

They returned to the garden, watched, and listened. While they were there, they watched as the culprit was stealing the soil right in front of them. It was the wind blowing away the topsoil.



The students came up with a plan. They invited all of the creatures back to the garden to help make more soil. They planted lots of veggies and plants to hold onto the soil and built a shelter to protect the soil from the wind.

All the garden creatures lived happily ever after, in the Fairfax veggie patch!



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