



FALL | Soil

Sleepy Soil: Preparing for Winter

Summary:

When the weather begins to cool, we start thinking about putting our gardens to bed for their long winter's nap. There are several things we can do to help our soil get ready for winter.

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: Hand rake, bucket, shovel, and any nap items your tiny gardener enjoys

Explore: "Flaming June" by Sir Frederic Leighton: What is happening in this picture?

Read: *A Nap in a Lap* by Sarah Wilson, Illustrated by Akemi Gutierrez

In the Garden:

Our tiny gardeners will probably be very familiar with nap-time as their little bodies still need lots of rest. Just like our tiny gardeners, our soil needs to take a break too. In the winter, the soil rests so that it is ready for spring planting.

Observations:

- Explore the garden.
- What do you hear as you walk? (Maybe crunchy leaves?)
- How do the plants feel? Are they dried out? Brittle?
- What do you smell? Dusty leaves? Warm dirt?

Questions to Explore:

- When do you take a nap?
- What do you bring to nap?
- Gardens nap too; do you think a garden naps the same way you do?
- How do you think we can help the garden take a nap?

Activity:

In addition to using all of our senses to explore the garden, we are also going to put our growing muscles to use. Before the garden takes a nap we have to make sure the soil is neat and tidy.

1. Choose a garden row to tackle today. Start by walking around collecting fallen leaves and sticks; you can use your rake to create a big pile.
2. Pull out old plants. Take your shovel and loosen the dirt around the base of a plant. A few quick tugs and you should have your plant, roots and all, ready to compost.
3. Be sure to gather any weeds and any other pesky garden intruders. If we get them now, we won't have to deal with them in the spring.
4. Dump everything you gathered into the compost pile, if you have one, or a bag for yard waste.

Now that your row is empty, have some fun turning the soil over, loosening it, and writing your name with the tip of your shovel. Playful soil is healthy soil. Before the dirt takes its long winter nap take one last opportunity to do some sensory exploration. As you leave, be sure to tell your garden that you'll be back after naptime for more spring fun.

Beyond the Garden | Take a Nap (or tell me a story about nap)

After all your hard work in the garden, your gardener might be ready for a nap. But, if they still have some energy, create a naptime book together. Think back over your time in the garden and write a story about your adventures. If your gardener does not have many words yet, work together to draw a picture or look back at photos you took of them in the garden. Try printing some images and pasting them into a short construction paper book that you can read before bedtime or take it back to the garden and read it together.

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Let's write a Story: <http://www.bookstart.org.uk/books/lets-write-a-story/>