Earthshaking Discovery:

It's Sedimentary

The sediment, or different types of soil particles, and how they float and settle, are unusual and interesting. Just shake up these soil-shakers and watch out.

What to do: Fill each jar with 1/2 cup of soil. Add water. The jar should be about three-quarters filled. Screw the lid on the jar tightly and shake well. Repeat the procedure with other soil samples to be tested.

Be patient and wait about 2 hours for the soil to settle. Then, with the magnifying glass, observe what happened to the soil samples. Draw a picture of the settled sediment in each jar.

What happens: The soil settles into bands, or layers, depending on the content of the soil.

Why: In sandy mixtures, heavier, rocklike particles settle first, followed by light-colored silty, sand-like grains. In most loamy, gardening top soils, the heavier gravel mix settles to the bottom, while the dark-colored, lighter-in-weight humus floats to the top of the jar. As you see, this is a good test for determining good, loamy, rich soils.

More Dirt

Collect soil samples in different areas when you go on long car trips and vacations. When you come home test the soil you have collected and discover how much humus and different kinds of soil are in each sample.