

## ACTIVITY!

# PLANT A MYSTERY GREENHOUSE GARDEN

What might be lurking in the soil? Find out by taking samples of soil from three different sites and seeing what grows!

- **Select three sites for collecting samples.** You might choose your backyard, a playground, a field, a nature preserve, or a beach. At each site, wear garden gloves as you collect soil with a trowel and pour it into a sealable bag. Label the bag so you know where this sample came from.
- **Line the inside of a shoebox lid with plastic wrap** to make a waterproof bottom for your greenhouse. With a marker, divide the lid into three equal horizontal sections.
- **Make 3 garden stakes with sticky notes and toothpicks.** On each sticky, write the name of one field site. Carefully poke a toothpick through the sticky to make a little flag. Set stakes aside for now.
- **Pour the first sample into its section of the lid.** Use a magnifying glass to examine the sample. What color is it? Is it moist, dry, sandy? Do you see any seeds? Any roots or shoots? Press the identifying toothpick stake into the soil. Repeat with the second and third samples. Start a scientific method worksheet in your science journal. Record your observations and predict what plants will sprout.
- **Lightly water, but don't flood, the samples.** With another sheet of plastic wrap, create a puffy roof for the greenhouse. Tape it securely in place. Place the greenhouse in a sunny location.
- **How long does it take plants to sprout?** Are plants different or the same among the samples? Can you identify any? Record your observations in your science journal.

## BIO BOX

- generous soil samples from three different sites
- shoebox lid
- plastic wrap
- toothpicks
- sticky notes

## Consider This

What do the different plants tell you about the soil and where it came from? Can you identify any plants that like to grow near water or in the shade?