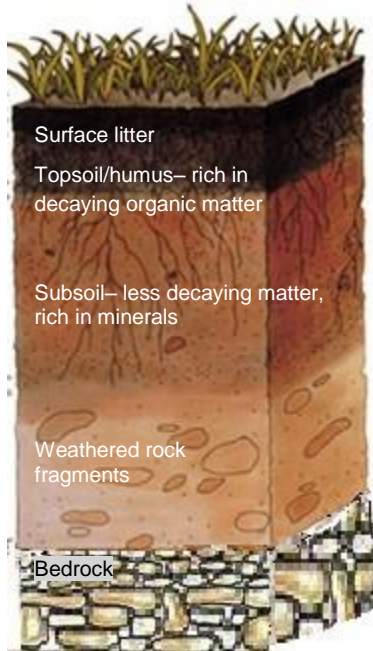


Earthworms

superheroes of the soil



- ◆ Soil is vital for plants -including our food crops, it stores and filters water, is a foundation for buildings and is home to many animals.
- ◆ Soil is composed of water, air, minerals and organic matter.
- ◆ Earthworms were described by Darwin as ‘nature’s ploughs’, mixing nutrients and organic matter through the soil.
- ◆ Their burrows help to aerate the soil and let water through.
- ◆ As they move through the soil they consume dead plant material, breaking it down into smaller pieces— this speeds up decomposition and allows nutrients to be recycled by bacteria and fungi.
- ◆ Worm casts (faeces) are rich in recycled plant nutrients, maintaining soil fertility.
- ◆ There are over 3,000 species of earthworm and 27 species native to Britain.

Try this at home Build your own wormery collecting worms and soil from the garden in an old clear jar. Intersperse layers of sand and put some vegetable peels/ fallen leaves on top. Put in a dark cupboard and watch as the worms mix up the layers. Make sure the wormery stays damp and there are air holes in the lid. Make sure you return your worms to the garden after a few weeks.