

# Much of a Mulchness

An interesting experiment into different materials and their properties. By looking at a variety of different mulches (a material that covers the soil) to discover which is the most effective at trapping moisture this deceptively simple activity can lead into the wider world of water. Why do we need to conserve water? How can we reduce watering and what are the benefits of this?

This activity can be preceded by the simple task of wandering around the school grounds searching for damp and dry areas. Dark, sheltered spots are likely to be damper than open exposed areas.



## Curriculum Links:

### Science: Materials, states of matter

#### KS1

- Distinguish between an object and the material from which it is made
- Identify and name a variety of everyday materials, including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water, and rock
- Describe the simple physical properties of a variety of everyday materials
- Compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties
- Identify and compare the suitability of a variety of everyday materials, including wood, metal, plastic, glass, brick, rock, paper and cardboard for particular uses

#### KS2

- Identify the part played by evaporation and condensation in the water cycle and associate the rate of evaporation with temperature
- Give reasons, based on evidence from comparative and fair tests, for the particular uses of everyday materials, including metals, wood and plastic
- Investigate the way in which water is transported within plants

## Human and physical Geography

#### KS2

- Physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle
- Human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water

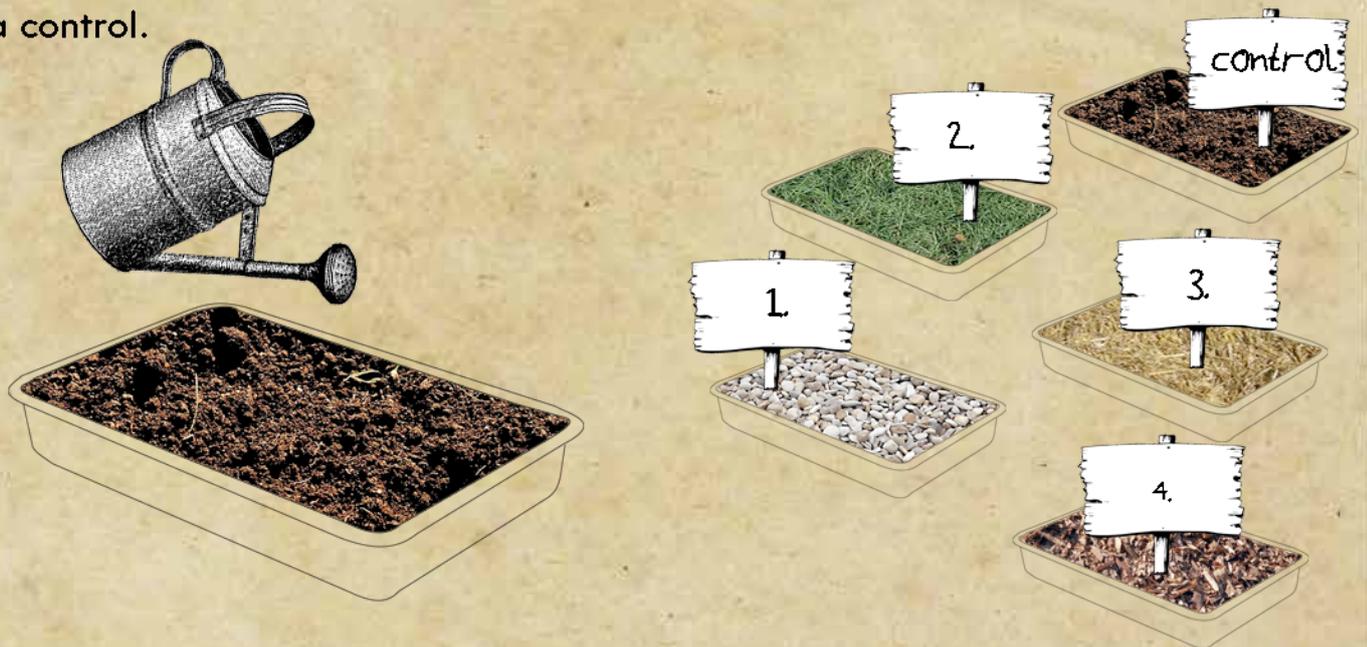
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**For more information about outdoor learning in schools call 07710 084388 or email [grow@growtoschool.co.uk](mailto:grow@growtoschool.co.uk)**

# Activity sheet 16 - Much of a Mulchness

You will need: 4 examples of mulch materials - grass, shredded paper, straw, bark chippings etc., 5 seed trays filled with soil, water.

1. Take a seed tray and water thoroughly, layer your chosen mulch on top and place in a covered dry sunny place for a week. Leave one seed tray uncovered as a control.



2. After a week have a look at the five trays. Note down which ones are dry and which ones are wet. Feel the soil - which soil appears to be the wettest? Note down your observations.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

control \_\_\_\_\_