

Artathon: Art touched by soil – 5 June 2025

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Javier Montellano – GAIA education

Marcus Maeder, ZhdK

masharu, Museum of Edible Earth



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State Secretariat for Education,  
Research and Innovation SERI

# Stephan Mantel



Tropical Agronomist  
Soil Scientist  
Head of World Soil Museum  
Curator of physical collections





## Program Artathon, Thu 5 June 2025, ISRIC, Wageningen Campus

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8.30 h – 9.00 h Registration and walk in with coffee

9.00 – 9.10 h Welcome (people in the room and online)

Morning session: hybrid meeting, people join online

9.10 – 9.40 h Introduction (Stephan Mantel),

- explanation process artathon

- explanation multi-sensorial workshops

9.40 – 10.10 h Presentation pigments (Erika Henskens)

10.10 – 10.40 h Coffee break

10.40 – 11.10 h Session 1 Multi-sensorial experience

11.10 – 11.20 h Exchange sessions

11.20 – 11.50 h Session 2 Multi-sensorial experience

11.50 – 12.00 h Closure morning session

End of hybrid part of the event



# Program Artathon, Thu 5 June 2025, ISRIC, Wageningen Campus



## Afternoon session – onsite only

12.00 – 13.00 h Lunch break

13.00 – 13.30 h Soil sounds Marcus Maeder (film)

13.30 – 14.00 h Session 3 Multi-sensorial experience

14.00 h – 14.10 h Exchange sessions

14.10 – 14.40 Session 4 Multi-sensorial experience

14.40 – 14.50 Exchange sessions

14.50 – 15.20 h Coffee break

15.20 h – 16.40 h Soil tasting (Museum of edible earth)

16.40 h – 17.00 h Discuss experience / questions

17.00 h – 17.30 h Closure with drinks



# Topics

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- About the World Soil Museum
- About the Curiosoil project
- About the artathon
- Multisensorial aspects of soils

# World Soil Museum of ISRIC



WSM is a unique museum

Collections of soil from around the world

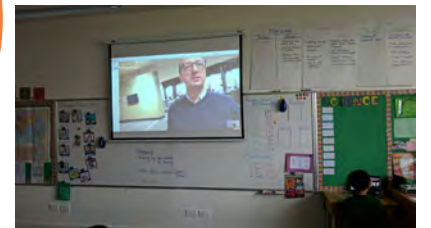
- Soil monoliths (section of profile wall on a board) with full data; almost 1000 profiles from about 80 countries
- Soil samples from the soil pits of the soil monoliths (4500)
- Images of the sites of the soil profiles
- Thin sections (slices of soil for study under microscope)
- Global collection of soil maps and reports

Core groups

- Higher education students (universities from NL, BE, DE)
- Scientists
- School pupils (primary, secondary)
- Vocational training pupils
- Special interest groups
- General public



# Visitors World Soil Museum











IS  
World S

# Storytelling to bridge the gap between soils and visitors ■■■



- Organische bodem
- Veenwinning
- Waterbeheer en veiligheid
- Verdroging
- Vervuiling
- Bodem als archief
- Stadsafval
- Invloed mens op bodem
- Inklinking
- Etc.



# Expositions

2014

herman de vries – Earth wipes



# Artist in residency (1)



- Exhibition and symposium artist Museum of Edible Earth – Masha Ru
- Collaboration with debate centre Impulse





# Artist in residency (2)



## Artist residency of Kate Foster (2022)

- Exposition in the World Soil Museum (variable set up)
- Peatland Exchange Series – online series van lectures en debat (Youtube Livestream)

Peatland Exchange#1: Past environments of peatlands

Peatland Exchanges #2: Archeological tales from the bog

Peatland Exchanges #3: Reviewing cultural histories

Peatland Exchanges #4: Living with peatlands today



Peatland Exchanges #3: Reviewing cultural histories

### Artist-in-residency Kate Foster

- The World Soil Museum collaborates with artists on the broader topic of soil to create (one or more of) awareness, facilitate dialogue, learning and exchange, stimulate engagement and curiosity, wonder, exploration and enjoyment.
- This year artist Kate Foster is artist-in-residence!
- The residency includes amongst others:
  - Peat exchange series, exhibit in the WSM and (other) engagement and dialogue events.
- Involved partners are:









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- About the artathon
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# EU MISSIONS

SOIL DEAL FOR EUROPE



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**Arianna Pasa**

Research Programme Officer  
AGRI.F2 Research and Innovation  
DG Agriculture and rural development  
European Commission

**#EUmissions #HorizonEU #MissionSoil**



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EU  
MISSIONS

SOIL DEAL FOR EUROPE

## Goal: 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030

### Specific objectives:

1. Reduce  
desertification

2. Conserve and  
increase soil organic  
carbon stocks

3. Stop soil sealing  
and increase re-use  
of urban soils

4. Reduce soil  
pollution and  
enhance restoration

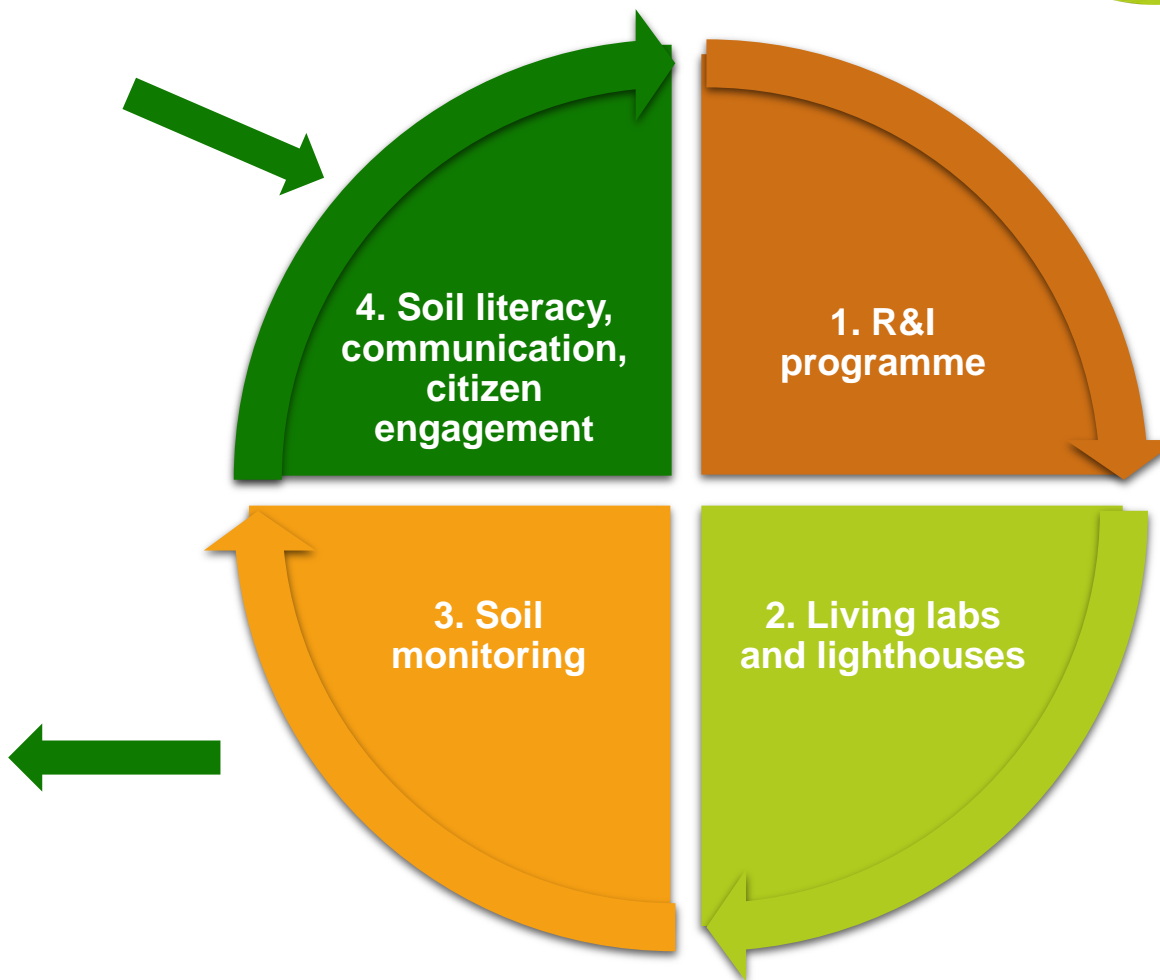
5. Prevent erosion

6. Improve soil  
structure to enhance  
soil biodiversity

7. Reduce the EU  
global footprint on  
soils

8. Improve soil  
literacy in society

Each specific objective is backed by **one or more quantified targets** and **measurable indicators**.  
Objectives apply to **all types of land use**.





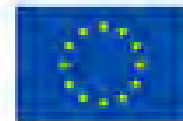


# CURIOSOIL

Awakening Soil Curiosity



to Catalyse Soil Literacy



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The **CURIOSOIL ambition** is to contribute to the **Soil Mission Specific Objective 8 to improve soil literacy in society and in particular the target to embed soil health in schools and educational curricula of all EU Member States by 2030** as well as to contribute to citizen, policy and practice increased knowledge and awareness to consider and manage soil health for a more sustainable and climate smart future.



Universidade de Aveiro (**UAveiro**, Portugal)

Gaia Education Europe (**GEDU**, Belgium)

European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability (**ECOLISE**, Belgium)

**REVOLVE** (Spain)

Faculty of Environmental Protection (**FEP**, Slovenia)

Wageningen University (**WU**, the Netherlands)

ISRIC – World Soil Information (**ISRIC**, the Netherlands)

European School Heads Association (**ESHA**, the Netherlands)

Università degli Studi di Palermo (**UNIPA**, Italy)

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (**BOKU**, Austria)

Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (**NIBIO**, Norway)

European Science Communication Institute (**ESCI**, Germany)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (**UICN**, Switzerland)

Zurich University of the Arts (**ZHdK**, Switzerland)



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## OBJECTIVES

**SO1.** Establish the **baseline for Soil Literacy** and **soil education needs** at **primary, secondary and tertiary levels** in all EU Member States

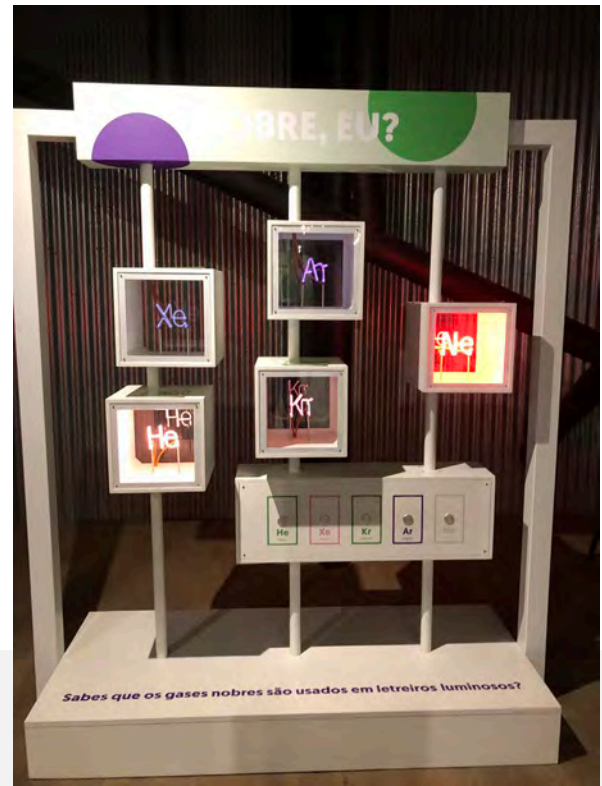
**SO2.** Co-create with the education community **courses, guidelines, and training** to integrate soil education in formal and non-formal education across the EU.

**SO3.** Make available new **multisensorial, interactive soil experiences**, both directly through **two Interactive Exhibitions (at the World Soil Museum and Fábrica da Ciência)** and the **Soil Curiosity Kit** and indirectly through educational materials, classified by academic level, in particular by blending virtual and physical elements.

**SO4.** Implement **soil communication campaigns** by concentrating CURIOSOIL's communication activities

**SO5.** Deliver specific **recommendations to public authorities, policymakers, schools and higher education institutions** on how to integrate soil literacy on educational programs, curriculum standards, and policies.

**SO6.** Identify and map **soil initiatives outside educational settings** across rural, peri-urban and urban areas of the EU and Horizon Europe Associated Countries and engage stakeholders in 15 **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** in 15 European countries (selected from PT, ES, IT, HR, NL, IE, FR, LU, CH, DE, PL, EE, RO, DK, SE, FI) to implement a process for piloting educational materials.





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# Artathon



Artathon organized June-July 2025 by ISRIC and Uaveiro. Prepare multi-media art pieces (e.g. musical compositions, dance, video installations and sculptures) for raising soil curiosity for the interactive Exhibitions to be organised in Febr 2026. Artathon participants (around 25) will be artists of various media and members of the public interested in the (co-)creation of art pieces on soil-related issues.

The event will consist of one introduction day with a multi-sensorial component to stimulate collaboration and spark inspiration. After this event, participants are given time to develop a concept during a period of **4 weeks**. After this period, a second day will be organized on **Friday 4 July (please make a note in your agenda)**.

On the second day of the Artathon, 8 shortlisted artists will present their concepts to the group. A selection will be made by a jury, and the winners (maximum of 4) will be announced at the end of the day. The selected artists will be given time to develop their concept to creation until Friday 28 November.

The winning artworks will be awarded a prize (5000 euro for creation of the artwork). Also, the selected artworks will be exhibited in the Interactive Soil Exhibition, starting in **January 2026** in the ISRIC - World Soil Museum in Wageningen, the Netherlands, and after that in the Fábrica Centro Ciência in Aveiro, Portugal in 2027. The exhibition will be available for expo (travelling) on other venues.

# Artathon

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Challenge subjects, e.g.:

- “Soil memories”
- “Soils of the earth”
- “Back to Earth”
- “Soil and the climate”
- “Soil and senses”
- “Soil and culture”
- “Soil and life”

Favoured art for the artathon/interactive exhibition is engaging/immersive/thought provoking/stimulating curiosity/sensory/....

# Artathon

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**6 June 2025 – 4 July 2025** Start concept process (4 weeks)

Artists develop a concept in their own environment

**30 June Deadline concept**

**4 July 2025 2nd day** at Wageningen (mark it in your agenda please)

- Artists will submit their concept to the Artathon organization
- Artists will present their concept in a short pitch to the other participants and jury

The concept will include:

the proposal of an artwork, including concept, detailed description (i.e. concerning materials, methodology, cost estimate), timeline and images (rendering or sketches) and a reference to earlier work/portfolio;



- The jury will shortlist 8 artists and select from the shortlisted artists the winning concepts (max of 4)
- The winning artists will receive financial support for production of their proposed art (maximum of 5000 euro's). In the case that less than four artists are selected then the financial support for the winning artists may be raised accordingly. The artists will sign a contract with details on conditions / rights etc.

## **5 July – 28 November** Start creating art piece

- Artists will create their art piece in their own environment
- Artists will make a weekly vlog about the process. The creation archive may be added to the Interactive Exhibition.
- Artists will get support from Art Mentor (Curator) who will be available throughout the duration of the process to provide guidance and feedback

# Artathon

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**28 November 2025** Deadline art piece

- Artists will deliver their art piece to the World Soil Museum

## Conditions

Prohibition of any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

Article 21 of EC Treaty, clause 1

The accepted artwork to be developed will travel (to Wageningen then to Aveiro and then to other locations). Consider this. How fragile is the work? Can it be installed/replicated/built up by local providers instead f.i?

### **Evaluation of proposed concepts:**

- 1) Max 30 points for innovative ideas and proposals that generate curiosity, excitement or discussion on the topic with soil health,
- 2) Max of 30 points for the capacity to stimulate public engagement/interactivity,
- 3) Max of 20 points for robustness of the art for public display and adequacy for travelling between exhibition venues,
- 4) Up to 20 points for previous experiences and projects aimed at integrating art, science, technology.

Co-creation of art of participants from different disciplines is favoured. Proposed art may include work in the field of video and photography, digital arts, collaborative and relational art, installations, sculptures, plastic arts.



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# CIEN AÑOS DE SOLEDAD

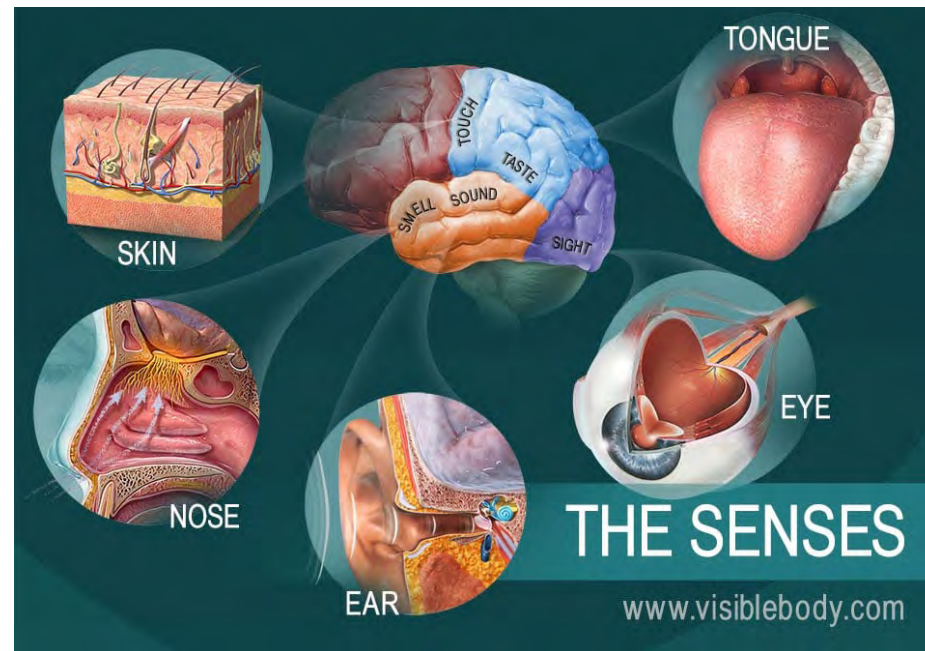
NETFLIX



# The five senses

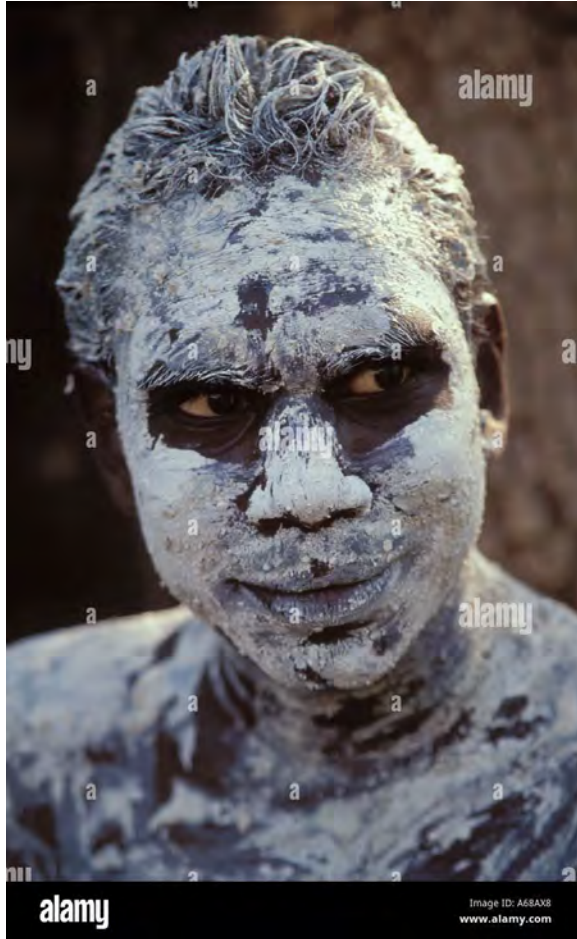


‘For most of us, one of the earliest memories of soil is a sensory one. Playing with mud as a child involved touch, smell and even taste (yes, definitely). With increasing urbanisation, many children spend their childhood in high-rise apartments, largely alienated from nature on the whole, and more specifically from ‘this experience of soil’. (Santosh Kumar)





# Feeling



# Uses of kaolinite clays



**Industrial:** a.o. production of paper, ceramics, insulation materials, paints, etc

## **Medical:**

- To soothe an upset stomach
- Kaolin-based preparations are used for treatment of diarrhea
- An ingredient in 'pre-work' skin protection and barrier creams
- To induce and accelerate blood clotting
- As a mild abrasive in toothpaste

## **Cosmetics:**

- Filler in cosmetics
- Facial masks or soap
- Spa body treatments, such as body wraps, cocoons, or spot treatments

**Geophagy:** Humans sometimes eat kaolin for pleasure or to suppress hunger.

**And many other uses**





IS  
World

China Clay / Kaolin Mines @ Nadapa, Kutch



# Uses of silica sand



## **1. Construction:**

- Concrete Production and mortar: Silica sand is a key ingredient in concrete, providing strength and stability.

## **2. Glass Manufacturing:**

- Silica sand is essential for producing glass, including flat glass (for windows), container glass (bottles), and fiberglass.

## **3. Ceramics**

## **4. Foundry:**

- molding material in metal casting processes due to its ability to withstand high temperatures.

## **5. Industrial Applications:**

- Filtration: Silica sand is used in water filtration systems to remove impurities.
- Abrasives: It is used in sandblasting and as an abrasive in various cleaning and polishing applications.
- Rubber, Ferro-silicon, Chemicals, Silicon carbide
- Optical and crystals
- Electric poles
- Micro-chips

## **1. Recreational:**

- Golf Courses and Sand Traps: It is often used in golf course construction and maintenance.
- Playgrounds and Sandboxes: Clean silica sand is used in children's play areas.

## **2. Oil and Gas Industry:**

- Fracking: Silica sand is used in hydraulic fracturing (fracking) to keep fractures open

## **3. Agriculture:**

- It can improve soil drainage and aeration when mixed with soil.

## **4. Military production**

## **5. Space industries**

## **6. Cosmetics and medical applications**



Source: LA times



# Seeing





# Smelling



- [Petrichor](#): A pleasant smell that comes after a rainfall.
- [Geosmin](#): The organic compound that creates the earthy smell of rain. Beet peels are rich in geosmin, giving them an earthy taste and smell, too.
- [Terroir](#): Soil, climate and sunlight that gives wine grapes and more a distinctive character.
- [Soil respiration](#): The measure of carbon dioxide released from soil.



**RAIN + GEOSMIN ON  
THE GROUND**



**= GEOSMIN IN  
THE AIR**



# Hearing





# Tasting





# Anthropomorphism



Anthropomorphism refers to seeing non-human objects as humans. Recent research suggests that anthropomorphizing objects could influence people's psychological and emotional bond with the objects. Anthropomorphism imbues non-human objects with human-like characteristics, alters people's relationship with the objects, and shift people's emotional and cognitive responses towards the objects.



# Activities



<b>Sight:</b>	<u>Painting with soil</u> ; <u>Microscope view soil</u> ; Observe the micro-world of soils	WSM
<b>Smell:</b>	<u>Smelling soil</u> ; Smell soils of different composition	WSM
<b>Touch:</b>	<u>Touching soil</u> ; blind touching of moist soil in buckets	WSM
<b>Taste:</b>	<u>Soil tasting</u> ; session with masharu	Plenary – GAIA 1
<b>Hearing:</b>	<u>Soil sounds</u> ; what is audible in the soil	Plenary – GAIA 1
<b>Anthropomorphism</b>		WSM

Let's go!







# CURIOSOIL

Artathon

5-06-2025



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