

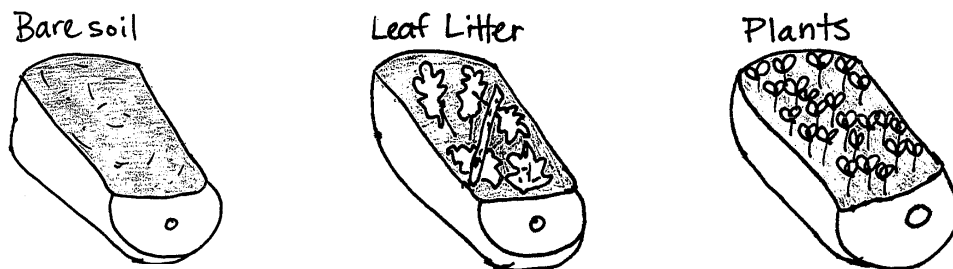
UNDERSTANDING SOIL EROSION WITH SOIL PLANTERS

(middle)

Water, wind, and glaciers can move soil or rock particles from one place to another. The loosening, transportation, and relocation of these particles is called **erosion**. The amount of erosion differs from place to place. Smaller particles are usually eroded more easily than larger particles. They are also transported farther than larger particles. Increasing numbers of particles can decrease the quality of river water when erosion occurs. Now, you can investigate erosion with planters.

What To Do:

- Go to the counter and find the soil planters. There are three of them. One contains bare soil, one contains leaf litter, and one contains plants.
- Before you begin, be sure each soil planter has a catch cup hanging from its neck. This will catch water that pours out of the planter.
- Pour a **small** amount of water on the planter with bare soil in it. Observe what happens to the water. Also make observations about the water that pours out into the catch cup.
- Next, pour a **small** amount of water on the planter with leaf litter in it. Observe what happens to the water. Also make observations about the water that pours out into the catch cup.
- Finally, pour a **small** amount of water on the planter with plants in it. Observe what happens to the water. Also make observations about the water that pours out into the catch cup.



Questions:

1. Which soil planter had the cleanest water come out of it?
2. Which soil planter had the dirtiest water come out of it?
3. Which of the planters had the most evidence of erosion in it? Explain why you think so.
4. What effect do you think plants have on erosion?
5. How can we use this information to help make the Illinois River cleaner?