

Make an Underground Utility Dirt Cake

This dessert is a fun and tasty way to learn about buried utilities! Work with your mini excavation crew to make an underground utility dirt cake, or prepare it yourself and surprise your crew when you reveal the utility lines and pipes.

Ingredients:

- 1 box of chocolate pudding, prepared
- 1/2 package of chocolate sandwich cookies with the center filling removed*
- 1 package of colorful rope candy

Supplies:

- Baking dish
- Gallon-size baggie
- Rolling pin
- Kitchen shears or scissors
- Spatula(s)

Take your dirt cake even further with these optional extras:

- White sprinkles or icing to white line your excavation area
- Utility flags made with toothpicks and construction paper



Match the APWA Color Code

Look for rope candy with some or all of the colors from the APWA Color Code! We used Rainbow Twizzlers, but you can use any type of rope candy you'd like.



Red: Electric

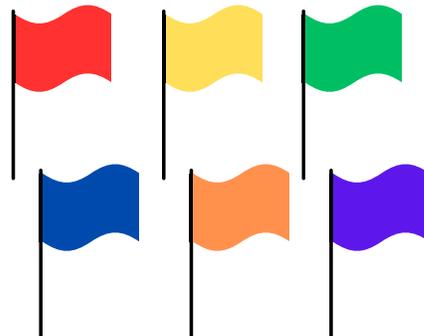
Yellow: Gas or oil

Green: Sewer or drain

Blue: Drinking water

Orange: Internet or phone

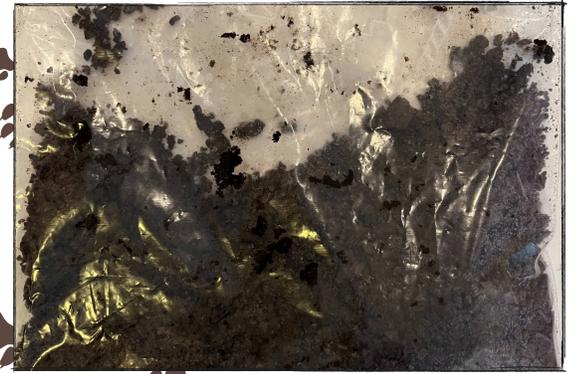
Purple: Reclaimed water, irrigation, or slurry



1

Step 1: Prepare the Dirt

After you've removed pulled apart the sandwich cookies and removed the creme or filling with a butter knife, place the cookies into a gallon-size baggie. Remove as much air as you can and seal the bag. Then use a rolling pin to crush the cookies as finely as you can. Set the crushed cookies, also known as the "dirt," aside.



2

Step 2: Pour a Layer of Mud

Get your baking dish out and use a spatula to fill it with enough chocolate pudding, or "mud," to cover the bottom of the dish. Be sure not to use all of your mud yet!



3

Step 3: Prepare & Add the Utility Lines & Pipes

Gather your rope candy utility lines and choose what colors you want to use. We recommend using the real APWA colors if you're able to! If you have long rope candy, use a kitchen shears or sharp knife to cut them into 1 to 2-inch pieces - this will make it easier to scoop and serve your dirt cake later! Place the rope candy pieces into the mud, creating utility lines & pipes that span your cake.



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Step 4: Bury the Utility Lines & Pipes

Add the rest of your chocolate pudding mud on top of the utility lines to bury them. If you're using a clear baking dish, you can choose to keep the ends of the lines visible to show how they sit under the ground or bury them completely, making them more fun to "locate" later! The utility lines should be completely covered from the top.



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Step 5: Add the Dirt

Completely cover the chocolate pudding mud with your crushed cookie dirt. Is your cake looking like a construction job site?



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Step 6: Educate & Excavate

Before you dig in, have a conversation with your mini excavation crew about underground utilities and safe digging. This is a great opportunity to talk about why contacting **811** is important and the steps to take before you dig. Once you're ready, grab some spoons and enjoy!

Optional Step: Decorate

If you'd like to, you can decorate your dirt cake with utility flags made from toothpicks and construction paper or white line it with white sprinkles or icing.

WHAT IS WHITE LINING? White lining is when someone who plans to dig marks their excavation site with white spray paint or flags. This important step helps the locator know exactly where to focus when they mark your excavation site. Use white sprinkles or icing to white line on your dirt cake!

Here's a few ideas to talk about:



- Right now, can we see the utility lines and pipes buried in the cake?
Answer: No!
- If we didn't put the utility lines and pipes in the cake, would we know they are there? **Answer:** No! This is what it's like outside too. There are utility lines and pipes buried all around us, but because we can't see them, we don't know where they are.
- If we want to dig, who do we contact to have the buried utilities located and marked so we know where they are? **Answer:** We **contact 811** - either by going online or calling 8-1-1 - and let them know about our project. They will get the process started to have locators come out to mark the buried utilities at your dig site.
- How do locators find the buried utilities? **Answer:** Locators use special machines that can show where the buried utilities are. They then use flags or spray paint to mark where the utilities are.
- What do the colors represent? **Answer:** See APWA Color Code above.
- What could happen if we were digging in real dirt and hit a buried utility with our shovel?
Answer: It could be very dangerous, and you could get hurt.
- What are underground utilities for? **Answer:** Buried utility lines and pipes bring electricity, water, internet, and other utilities to and from buildings - like our home or school. They can also be used to move slurry, reclaimed water, and oil long distances under the ground.