

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE 38



Petrichor

ENVIRONMENT

POEM

Step outside
Nose awakened
Fresh, wet, earthy
The ground is ready
Always ready
Soil sponge
Soaking in gifts from above
Always giving back.

ACTIVITY

The next time it rains, snows, or on a dewy or frosty morning, step outside and take a few big breaths. What do you smell? Describe the scent using words on paper or by drawing a picture.



CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SMELL OF RAIN?

Did you know there is a word for the aroma of what you smell after it rains? The word is Petrichor (Pet-ri-kore), one of my favorite words and smells! But why does the earth smell like, well, earth after it rains? What is that sweet, natural scent made from? When rainwater soaks into the soil, it breaks up the ground and releases something called Geosmin. Geosmin is a natural compound made from bacteria in the soil and algae. Geosmin comes from the Greek words for "earth" and "smell." How fitting!

Geosmin is a big reason why we smell an earthy petrichor scent after rain, but what else makes this scent besides Geosmin? Rainwater brings out the scents of decomposing matter (old natural materials) and humus (healthy soil packed with nutrients.) We will be learning more about humus on a Nat Theo episode in November. So when rain soaks into the ground, it kind of awakens or intensifies the scents of Geosmin, natural decaying materials, and healthy soil, creating a Petrichor scent. Or you can simply call it the sweet smell of a rainy day!

God used rain to teach an important lesson in Isaiah 55:10–11: "Rain and snow fall from the sky and don't return without watering the ground. They cause the plants to sprout and grow, making seeds for the farmer and bread for the people. The same thing is true of the words I speak. They will not return to me empty. They make the things happen that I want to happen, and they succeed in doing what I send them to do."

How does rain help things grow? How can God's Word help grow good things in our hearts and minds? Like rain watering the earth and bringing forth flowers and food, God's Word waters our hearts and brings new life. When you smell the wet, earthy petrichor scent after it rains, think about God's Word soaking into your heart.

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