'Dirt-O-Rama' Media Opportunities

- **Installation of 'Art of the Earth' Juried Artworks - Great photo opportunity.**
  May 27-31 (approximate dates - call for specifics)
  Although 'Dirt-O-Rama' won't open until June 2, these artworks will be installed in late May. It's always fun to talk to the creative, interesting artists behind the pieces and document the installation.

  Step inside a sculpture of a giant anthill, visit a garden of “sonic flowers” to hear sounds of the forces that shape earth’s crust, check out a giant Earth composter and more. Here are the five winning designs you'll encounter on the Arboretum grounds: "Ant Venture" by Albert Belleveau of Poposky, Minn.; "The Amazing Mother Earth Composter" by Seitu Jones of St. Paul, in collaboration with Gordon Parks High School; "Earthly Coat" by Wendy J. Johnson of Crystal Bay, with collaborators Colleen Werden and West End Welding; "Eco-Earthworms" by Paul Rieffer, Donna Tabat and Jill Spohn of St. Paul; "Underground Sound" by Daniel Dean and Ryan Wurst of Minneapolis.

- **VIP 'Dirt-O-Rama' Reception Thursday, May 31, 5-7 p.m.** Get a sneak preview of the exhibition before opening day! Talk with Sandy Tanck, exhibition curator, and Ed Schneider, Arboretum director. The artists behind the 'Art of the Earth' artworks also will be present to discuss their creations.

Ongoing Opportunities

- **Weekend Family Fun.** Saturdays and Sundays, from noon to 4 p.m. Free with gate admission. Marion Andrus Learning Center. Hands-on learning adventures explore all facets of soil. In June, the topic is "Dynamic Dirt"; in July, it's "Marvelous Mud" and in August, "Crazy about Compost." The fun happens in the Mud Pie Kitchen, part of the new Green Play Yard at the Learning Center.

- **Compost: Gardener’s Gold.** Visit the Compost Corner to discover how to turn yard and kitchen organic waste into rich, valuable compost. Learn the environmental importance of removing yard waste and leftover kitchen organics from the landfill stream and how to compost these materials instead.

- **Dirt Lab.** Successful gardeners know that plants thrive when soil’s alive. Stop by the Dirt Lab in the circular garden island fronting the Oswald Visitor Center to pick up tips on “growing” healthy soil, including how to test soil at a hands-on soil texture station and view plantings that demonstrate the value of compost.

- **Clayhouse Project.** For three weeks in July (July 14-31), Arizona clay artists and adobe builders Athena and Bill Steen will create a Clayhouse, a playful, child-friendly earthen structure in front of the Learning Center. Visitors are invited to get their hands dirty and help build on weekends during their residency. The Steens have created earthen buildings internationally. They recently completed a Clayground residency at the Denver Museum of Art and have exhibited at the Smithsonian.

- **Biochar Research Project:** Watch for results as University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners evaluate garden beds amended with Biochar, a carbon-rich byproduct of making biofuel, at the Arboretum this summer. The Cenusa Bioenergy Project is a four-year national study funded by U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The End