

The Dirt on Dirt

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It may not be every day that you need “dirt” to decorate your cakes, but the need does arise. Maybe it’s a beach-themed cake, a pot of flowers, or a garden. What makes these cakes become something special? It’s the dirt.

How many times have you seen a beach cake covered in brown sugar? It may be the right color, but who wants a mouthful of sugar? Not only does the “dirt” need to look good, it needs to taste good too.

When you take great care to make sure your flowers and foliage look as realistic as possible you should also make the effort to make the “dirt” around them look real too. Not all dirt looks the same. Potting soil has deep, dark colors and white spots.

Beach sand has multiple shades of browns, cream and yellow, with shiny bits. Tropical beach sand is more one tone with lots of white and cream colors. Desert sand looks a lot like beach sand with bits of rock and pebbles. Bermuda beach sand is white with pink. Backyard dirt is mostly brown with a mix of darker tones and a few pebbles and twigs. Pebbles are nothing more than bits of fondant dusted with petal dust. They can be made in just about any size and the more irregular the shape the more realistic they look. Just pinch off a piece of fondant, roll it around in your hand and shake it in a plastic bag with petal dust. Use multiple colors of pebbles to get the most realistic look.

I like to use cookies to make my dirt. They come in a wide range of colors and taste good too. A quick whirl in the food processor and you’ve got dirt. For sand, add sanding sugar to the crumbs to give it just the right amount of sparkle. You can use just about any kind of cookie that will give you the right color; however, crunchy cookies give the best results.

- Crunchy chocolate chip cookies – brown with bits of black
- Chocolate sandwich cookies – nearly black with bits of white
- Chocolate wafer cookies – a reddish brown
- Vanilla Wafers™ – golden light brown
- Vanilla wafer cookies – yellow to orange
- Strawberry wafer cookies – pink
- Dehydrated white cake - white

Just mix, match, and blend until you’ve got the perfect dirt you need.

