

## Mother's Dirt – Father's Soil

*By Emma G. Jackson*

When I thought of "digging in the dirt" my mind immediately went back to my mother and her gardening. Digging, hoeing, dragging dirt from one place to another for planting her beans, greens, corn and other veggies.

While writing this piece I found that there are different kinds of "earthen coverings of dirt or ground" that we walk, run, drive on and plant in.

When my Dad added chemicals to the soil to get better production from his crops, he did not say I am adding chemicals to the dirt. It was called "soil." When he dug trenches along the sides of the fields for drainage it was to prevent soil erosion or washing away his enriched soil.

We called the unpaved road in the community the "dirt" road recognized by the dust it caused when cars travelled on it. The major difference between "dirt" and "soil," I found was the stick-together consistency, growth production, and whether it could provide for and house living things like earthworms and other microbes. Soil can and dirt cannot.

However, when "digging in the dirt" in another context where "dirt" is perceived as unclean, unproductive and un-useful for positive growth, the action can be negative and often very damaging especially to character and career. One only has to view or hear, through various media reports, the results of this form of "digging in the dirt."

A topic for another time.