

Cotton community it's time to in the name of soil health



Do your own fun soil science experiment to see how healthy your soil is and share your experiences with your local REO.

Bury a pair of 100 per cent white cotton undies in topsoil for two months and then check the level of decomposition. If there's not much left of the undies you have good biological activity, which indicates healthy soil. These same soil organisms can break down plant materials in much the same way.

To make more sense of your soil health or test how your soil is doing you might want to soil your undies a few times. You might consider the following comparisons:

- Test similar soil types under either different rotations, tillage or water management.
- Compare your field with remnant, revegetated or grassy areas on your farm.

Ask your neighbour to soil their pants as well and compare across the fence line. If you want to do a comparison then be sure to bury all undies being compared on the same day and dig it up 2 months later.



The above images are from the Canadian Soil Your Undies campaign.

What you'll need

Contact your local CottonInfo REO and they can provide you with the following!

- 2 new pairs of white 100% cotton undies (no dyes or polyester blends).
- 2 Marker flags.
- Zip lock bags and a marker pen to keep and compare your soiled pants.

What you'll need to have on hand.

- A shovel.
- Peg for the flag to go onto.

Then you...

1. Dig a shallow hole, 5cm deep and large enough to lay your undies on the bottom.
2. Lay your undies onto the bottom of the hole and bury them with the removed topsoil.
3. Mark the burial site with a flag so you'll be able to find it again.
4. Leave the undies buried for two months.
5. Dig it up carefully, there should not be much more than the waistband left. Lift up the undies, get photos and video of this and if you want to keep them for a bit or to aid in comparison pop them into your labelled zip lock bag.
6. We encourage you all to use your phones to get video or photographs of your burials and recoveries. Take photos of the 2 pairs of undies side by side as a comparison and let your REO know so they can check out your soiled undies!

