



How to #SoilYourUndies



This is a fun take on the cotton test, a do-it-yourself test for microbial activity in your soil. Anyone can compare the soil biology between test strips or between fields, or across regions and all you need are a few pairs of white 100% cotton briefs. Bury the underwear in the topsoil for a few months and then compare the levels of decomposition. If that underwear looks like a G-string after 2 months you've got healthy soil, because biological activity indicates higher levels of organic matter. These same micro-organisms can break down crop residue in much the same way and eliminate the need for tillage.

What you'll need:

- New pairs of white 100% cotton briefs (no dyes, no boxers, no polyester blends)
- Shovel
- Flag

Dig a small trench and bury the underwear in the top 6 inches of the soil. Leave the waistband showing a little and mark the place with a flag so you'll be able to find it back again. Leave the underwear buried for about two months. Dig it up carefully and wash it in a bucket of water to remove the soil if necessary.

To make a good comparison:

- Test similar soil types under different rotations and managements
- Keep track of each pair by writing an identifying number on the waistband
- Be sure to bury all underwear being compared on the same day, and for same amount of time.

Share your photos with us on Twitter @IFAO123 and use the hashtag #soilyourundies



2015 winner of IFAO challenge:
Mark Koabel, Niagara ON



Megan Dwyer @farmin88 buries
undies in cornfield in 2015.



Mike Sieve @clayallover
"Wait a minute. Let me read
the instructions again!"