



SOIL BODIES – THE LIVING TAPESTRY

Participant Instructions

This document guides you through all the phases of **Soil Bodies- The living Tapestry**- from selecting and documenting your garment to its burial, soil observation, garment retrieval and return.

Please carefully read these instructions and keep them for reference. You can find further information, news, updates and additional materials on the official website of about Soil Bodies- The living Tapestry: www.edieloustudio.com/soil-bodies

STEP 1: SELECT A GARMENT

Choose one clean garment from your wardrobe that you no longer need. We recommend selecting a white or black garment, as changes caused by contact with the soil are generally easier to observe on these colors. Suitable garments include T-shirts, shirts, dresses, trousers, sweaters and undergarments.

If you want to use the decomposition of your garment as an indicator of soil biological activity, choose a garment made mainly from cotton or another biodegradable natural fiber. If you are interested in how different textile materials behave in soil, any fiber composition can be relevant, including synthetic and blended textiles.

The fiber composition of your garment is important because different textile fibers behave differently in soil. Natural and regenerated fibers such as cotton, linen, wool, silk and viscose can undergo biological degradation, while synthetic fibers such as polyester, nylon and acrylic are considerably more resistant. Blended textiles may contain both biodegradable and persistent components.

STEP 2: GET READY FOR DATA COLLECTION

As a data collection platform, we use the app “Beweisstück Unterhose”, which is available here: [Beweisstück Unterhose-App – App Store](#) or here [Beweisstück Unterhose – Google Play](#). Please download the app and create an account. Basic instructions about how to register for an account and how to use the app can be found [here](#).

The app forms and functions can also be assessed from your computer at home under www.Soilproof.org/map.



STEP 3: IDENTIFY AND DOCUMENT THE TEXTILE

Before burying the garment, document the textile as accurately as possible. The fiber composition should be taken directly from the care label whenever available. For blended textiles, record the exact percentages; for example, record *96% cotton / 4% elastane* rather than simply *cotton*. If the composition is unknown, please record it as unknown rather than estimating it.

Please record:

- Garment type
- Textile or fiber composition, including percentages where available
- Color
- A photograph of the garment before burial

This information is essential for the later interpretation of the garment because the degree and type of decomposition cannot be evaluated independently from its material composition. Write it down and enter this information in the App as described in the next step.

STEP 4: SELECT AND DOCUMENT THE BURIAL SITE

Choose a location where the soil is unlikely to be disturbed during the approximately 6 weeks burial period. Record the location and describe the land-use type. It is easiest, if you use the Beweisstück Unterhose App for this.

- **Open the App and enter a new Spot.** To add a new spot, press the  button for each sampling location. Click on  and check that the correct location is displayed on the map. You must grant your smartphone permission to access your location. Press again, if necessary.
- For the question “*Are you participating in a specific project?*” click “*Other*” and type: “*Soilbodies*”. On some phone models, you have to double click in the field to be able to type.
- **Provide background information on the burial site.** Answer the different questions about the site. If you don’t know the answers, click “*Other*”. This information is important, so we can interpret the findings, e.g. on why some garments get decomposed stronger than others.
- **Take a picture.** Where it says “*Please take a picture of the soil surface*”, Provide a picture of the garment, ideally lying on the soil surface of the site, where it will be buried. Clicking on this symbol  will let you take a picture using your camera. This symbol  lets you choose a picture from your photo library.
- **Enter the information about your garment.** In the field saying, “*Are there any further details, or did you notice something you would like to tell us?*”, please record information about your garment as described in STEP 3.



- **Important privacy notification.** If you do not want the location where you buried your garments to be seen by others on the map, click “hide map location”. If you want both, the location and the data not to be seen by others, click “fully hide spot” at the very end of the app menu.
- **Saving the Information.** Once everything is filled in, click on  **SAVE** and the spot and the data will be saved. If you want to finish your entry later, click on  to temporarily save your data. You can later click on the menu symbol  and select “waiting spots” and finalize entering the information.
- **If you want to change an entry,** simply click on the spot on the map, click on the three dots  and select «Edit Spot». You can also find all you spots in your profile (top right corner- see above) and then clicking on the  symbol.

STEP 5: BURY THE GARMENT

Carefully cut and lift the vegetation and upper soil layer in sections so that the existing surface can be replaced after burial. Dig a shallow pit approximately **20 cm deep** and large enough for the garment to lie flat. Place the garment flat at the bottom of the pit and ensure good contact between the textile and the surrounding soil.



Cover the garment completely with the excavated soil and carefully replace the sections of vegetation and topsoil in their original position. Firm the soil by trampling on it to ensure good contact between the textile and the soil, while leaving the burial site otherwise as undisturbed as possible. Mark the location, for example with a labelled stick or another marker, so that the garment can be found again easily.

This video shows how to bury the garments: <https://youtu.be/MuQGTL84ZXg>

The target burial period is 6 weeks. In unusually warm and moist conditions, the garment may be recovered after 4 weeks; otherwise, leave it for 6 weeks.

STEP 6: DOCUMENT YOUR SOIL

While the garment is buried, perform at least one soil test: Soil Texture by Feel. This test provides an estimate of the relative proportions of sand, silt and clay. Soil texture influences properties such as water retention, aeration and nutrient storage and therefore provides important contextual information for interpreting the textile transformation.



If you have more time, we strongly recommend also performing VESS and the Earthworm Count. These assessments provide further information about soil structure and biological activity.

Detailed instructions are provided in **Document 2:** [Getting to know your soil](#)

STEP 7: RECOVER AND DOCUMENT THE GARMENT

After approximately 6 weeks, carefully excavate the garment, taking care not to tear or otherwise damage the material during recovery. Photograph the garment after excavation so that its condition can be compared with the documentation made before burial.

Do not wash, brush or clean the garment. If it is wet or damp, allow it to air-dry naturally. Soil residues, roots, fungal growth, discoloration and other traces produced during burial should remain on the textile, as these form part of the documentation of the soil–textile interaction.

STEP 8: RETURN THE GARMENT

Once the garment is completely dry, place it in the return packaging provided and send it back to us or bring it on April 25th, 2027, in person to Maison Shift in Zürich, where we will jointly create the Living Soil Tapestry. We will provide detailed information on shipping and the event at a later point. The returned garment will be documented together with the information recorded about its fiber composition, burial site and soil conditions before becoming part of the next stages of **Soil Bodies – The Living Tapestry**.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULT

The visible condition of the garment after burial is influenced by both the soil and the textile itself. A strongly decomposed garment does not automatically indicate “good soil,” just as an intact garment does not automatically indicate “poor soil.” Cotton, for example, can be readily decomposed by microorganisms under suitable conditions, whereas polyester may remain largely unchanged in the same soil.

For this reason, the results are interpreted by considering fiber composition, soil characteristics, land use and the observed degree of textile transformation together. This relationship between soil conditions and material composition is a central part of Soil Bodies.