



Tea Bag Index



Tea Bag Index is a citizen science app that allows people to easily collect observational data about soil. The app's interface is user friendly and allows everyone, not just scientists, to learn more about soil organic matter content and decomposition.

How to use the app

Soil decomposition rate can be measured by burying a tea bag in soil and observing the tea leaves decomposition. First, you take a tea bag and weigh it. Then bury it in the soil that you want to study. After three months, you dig up the tea bag and weigh it. Calculate the difference between the tea bag's weight before and after decomposition. Then, record your observations about how much the tea leaves have decomposed as well as any other interesting things you observe about the tea bag. If you want to learn more about your soil faster, you may also record basic soil observations such as soil color, soil life, and land use as well as uploading pictures of your soil. You may also participate in the Spade test—a more in-depth, yet relatively quick way to assess soil quality (check out this [video](#) for more information).

How you can get the app

To download and install the app on Android and Apple devices, use the following links.

Get the app for an [Android!](#)

Get the app for an [Apple!](#)

Once you download the app, create your own account using an existing email address. Then, create a username and password that you will remember.

Why using Tea Bag Index is fun and important

Every observation you will make and upload onto the app will provide information about the organic matter content and the decomposition products in the soil. A small experiment where you use tea bags, take photos, and upload information can generate an abundance of information about soil.

For more information, visit the [Tea Bag Index website](#).

Now that you have the Tea Bag Index app, **we challenge you** to take observations of soil in your community. Take a picture, record basic soil observations, and then compare your observations to other soil observations on Tea Bag Index. Tell us what differs between the two soils! Submit your answer by direct messaging our Instagram account at [@YCITYSCI](#) for the chance to win a prize and your answer be featured on our page! New Tea Bag Index questions will be added to our Instagram story and page throughout the week. Respond to these questions to have a chance to win additional prizes!



Check out more Y-CITYSCI activities at [ycitysci.wordpress.com](#) and [www.siuSTEMcenter.org/ycitysci/](#)

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