

The aim of this project is to test the effects of nutrient addition on decomposition in global grasslands using tea bags.

Method: Bury tea bags in at least 3 plots from all nutrient addition treatments in the field (at least 24 plots total).

Protocol TBI in NutNet

1. Mark the tea on the white side of the label using a permanent marker. Please, use the coding of the table in this document (see below).
2. Weigh the tea bags **air dried**, not oven dried (0.001 digits).
3. At the experimental site, use a chisel (or something similar) and a mallet to make an 8-cm deep slit, move the chisel side-to-side to create some space, and carefully introduce one green tea bag in the slit. You can use a wooden stick to help slide it into the hole. Repeat this procedure for a rooibos tea bag (place them approximately 15 cm apart). You can choose the location of the bags to your own convenience.
4. Leave the strings and the labels above the ground.
5. Write down the date on the backside of this form.
6. Close the slits. Place a stick or a flag next to the bags and attach the string of each bag to the stick. That will make it much easier to find back the bags.
7. Repeat this three more times to bury all eight bags in sets of one green and one rooibos tea bag.
8. Wait ca 80-90 days.
9. Find back the tea.
10. Carefully follow the string and dig up the tea without tearing holes in the fabric.
11. Write down the date.
12. Place two green tea and two rooibos tea bags in two small zip-lock plastic bags, separating by tea type, and immediately freeze at -20°C. Freezing will be done as soon as possible, but samples can be safely stored in cool conditions until they are back in the lab for a short period of time. You do not need to weigh them.
13. Remove **all** soil parts and roots of the remaining four tea bags (two of each type) and let them dry (60 or 70 degrees, 48 hours). Sometimes soil parts are easier to remove after you have dried the bags for a little.
14. **Remove the label before weighing** the tea. Weigh the oven dried tea.
15. Send the data to R.OchoaHueso@westernsydney.edu.au. Use the standardized form provided by email. The form can also be found at the NutNet webpage.



Thank you!

How can I obtain the tea bags?

The tea bags can be ordered online from here <http://www.dutchsupermarket.com/en/lipton-green-tea-sencha.html> and here <http://www.dutchsupermarket.com/en/lipton-rooibos-tea.html>. They give 10% discount upon mentioning TBI10. If you could source them online or locally, that'd be ideal. However, it is definitely not easy to source them or buy those particular tea bags in certain countries, and so I need to know who needs them to be supplied so I can arrange things ahead of time. You'll need a minimum of 5 boxes per tea type (10 boxes of 20 tea bags each in total, for an approximate total cost of \$30) to bury four bags per plot per tea type.