

## TeaTime4Schools

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Logo TeaTime4Schools, Bild: AGES

In the Sparkling Science project "TeaTime4Schools", students, together with scientists from AGES and Open Science, are investigating the biological activity in Austrian soils. With the help of a simple and easy-to-use Tea Bag Index method, where standardized tea bags are buried and weighed, the students determine the decomposition rate of organic material in the soil. New insights are gained about the interaction between decomposition and microbial activity of the soil.

Over the two-year term, the Higher Federal Institute for Wine and Fruit Production in Klosterneuburg will bury teabags in different soils at four different times and determine the rate of decomposition. In addition, the microbial communities in the soil under investigation are analyzed by means of next-generation sequencing analysis. In addition, information on the methodology is given, the technical background is explained, and the data analysis and interpretation of the results are carried out together with the students and scientists involved in the project.

In addition to the partnerships, 150 Austrian school classes will be involved in the project, and will determine the Tea Bag Index in soils close to their schools.

The goal of the project is to create an Austrian map of decomposition. The map will be integrated into the global map of the Tea Bag Index Initiative, in which AGES is involved. All results will be presented jointly by the scientists and students at the large final workshop.

Through the project, Austria will become an innovative actor in the mapping of decomposition rates with the help of Citizen Scientists. All project partners and stakeholders are given new insights into the role of microorganisms in decomposition. Furthermore, students' awareness of the importance of the soil, its functions and its influence on the global carbon cycle and climate change will be increased.

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