Geophysical Research Abstracts
Vol. 20, EGU2018-7538-1, 2018
EGU General Assembly 2018

Soil lacquer peel DIY: simply capturing beauty

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Visualization can greatly benefit understanding of concepts and processes, which in soil science and geology can be done using real life snapshots of soils and sediments in lacquer peels and glue peels. While it may seem complicated, anyone can make such a soil peel for use in classrooms, public places, homes and offices for teaching, outreach, decoration and awareness. Technological development has considerably simplified the making of soil peels, but this methodological innovation has not been described in the literature. Using field photos, video, cartoons and portable example peels, we will show and report our thoroughly tested and simple method for taking soil peels of sandy soils using readily available tools and materials. Our method follows the main previously published steps of preparing a soil face, impregnating the soil face with a fixation agent in the field, extraction of the resulting soil peel and mounting it on a wooden panel. Yet instead of using the traditional lacquers and thinning agents, we use strong though flexible contact adhesive (glue), which has the major advantage that it no longer requires use and mixing of toxic chemicals in the field or reinforcement of the soil peel to prevent breaking. Moreover, the preservation potential is much higher than with the old method. This new twist to old methods makes creating of soil peels more safe, simple and successful, and a thereby true DIY (do it yourself) activity. The resulting increased accessibility of making soil peels can benefit research, teaching, and science communication and can thereby bring the value and beauty of the ground below our feet to students, schools, policy makers, and the general public.