

Soil Test Instructions

You can guess what your soil needs. Sometimes that is the best way. But many times a soil test will help you a lot to know what you need. You can save a lot by taking a soil sample because you aren't as likely to waste fertilizer and minerals. Also you will most likely grow much better crops – better both in quality and quantity.

The best time for sampling is after the crop is mature or harvested for row crops. Hay fields, pasture and lawn samples may be taken anytime when the temperature is above 40 degrees F.

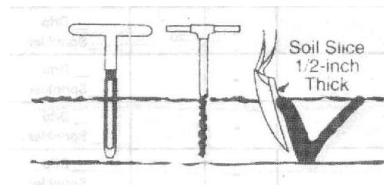
Procedure for taking a good Soil Sample.

1. Divide your field into areas which have the same soil type, color, slope, fertilizer, liming, and crop history.
2. Scrape away surface litter and sample to plow depth for all row crops. On permanent pastures, sods, lawns, and turf areas, sample four inches deep. Avoid areas or soil conditions that are different such as lime piles, fertilizer spills, gate areas, livestock congregation areas, poorly drained areas, dead furrows, fertilizer bands, old fence rows, or any other unusual area.
3. Several different tools such as a soil sampling tube, soil auger, or spade may be used in taking soil samples, as illustrated. Do not use galvanized, soft steel, or brass equipment if trace metal analysis are desired. It is important that the

samples are pure. We recommend that samples are not touched by hands.

4. Take approximately 15 cores or slices from each uniform soil area, mix them thoroughly in a clean plastic or paper container. If samples are soggy wet, we suggest they be air dried a bit before packaging, (normally no drying is necessary). Put about 1 lb of the soil sample in a clean plastic bag or in the soil sample bag I gave you.
5. Label each soil sample bag with your name and a sample identification number. Remember to label every sample and keep track of where you took each sample.
6. Bring the soil sample to me and I will fill a form out and mail it off to the lab. One soil test costs \$25; 5 or more cost \$22. Pay me at the time you drop the sample off. Allow 2 weeks after the sample is mailed off for the results to come back. I will need your name, address, phone number, soil samples, and if you want recommendations, I will want to know what crop you plan to be growing, what crops were grown in the previous year, your yield goal, sample depth, any fertilizers you've applied in the last year, and if you irrigate

with drip, sprinklers or no irrigation.



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Keep your soil sample records for reference for future years.