

How To Take A Soil Sample

Size of Sample Unit

The first step in a sound sampling procedure is to subdivide the area into uniform units. Do not assume that fields enclosed by fences are uniform units. In subdividing a field, use past history and visual differences reflected by changes in soil type for first approximations. Avoid areas where fertilizer or liming materials may have been spilled, gate areas where livestock have congregated, poorly drained areas, or fertilizer band areas of last years crop. It is also advisable to stay at least 50 feet from barns, roads, lanes or fence rows. Within fields that appear uniform, 20 to 25 acres is the acceptable unit size, with the size increasing as the area of uniformity increases. Of course, the more borings (sub samples) taken within a sample unit, the greater the accuracy of the sample. However, one sub sample per 2-2 ½ acres should be adequate. When sampling, use a zig-zag pattern or random approach and pull cores at least 150 feet apart.

How To Sample

With a spade, trowel, auger, or soil sampling tube, take a thin vertical slice or core of soil from at least 10-20 different places in the area to be tested. Combine in a clean plastic bucket, mix thoroughly, and fill the soil sample bag **half** full. Fold down and fasten metal flaps securely. The bag should be clearly marked with your name, address, and sample identification. Fill out the soil information sheet as completely as possible. Be sure the sample numbers on the information sheet correspond with the numbers on the sampling bag. Your soil tests results accuracy will be dependent on properly taken, mixed and submitted samples so please follow these procedures closely.

Suggested Sampling Depths

Lawns, Turfs & Pastures	4"
Gardens	6"
Pecan Groves	6" to 8"
Orchards	8" to 12"
Row Crops	Plow Depth