

HOW TO TAKE AN ACCURATE SOIL SAMPLE

Why Should You Test Your Soil?

Testing your soil is very important as it tells you how healthy your soil is or isn't. The soil testing measures the PH level as well as any nutrient deficiencies. By doing this every few years, it assists you in growing a healthy beautiful lawn and garden, as well as, it will save you a lot of time and money by knowing what you need to do before the planting begins.

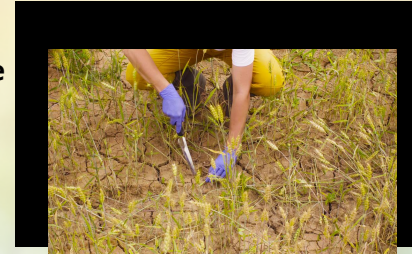
Materials Needed: Bucket, Garden shovel/trowel, plastic zip lock (quart size) bag, sharpie, measuring cup.

Step 1 - Prior to digging your core sample, make sure and remove all organic matter and debris from the top layer in which you will be taking your core samples from.

Step 2 - With a clean shovel and bucket you will want to take your soil samples from dry soil (before adding fertilizer of any kind). You will want to take a sample from 6-10 different areas from where you are wanting to plant your vegetable/flower garden or lawn. Your samples should be 6-8 inches deep. Put your samples of your vegetable garden area in one bucket, your flower garden samples in another bucket, and so on.



Step 3 - Once you have filled your bucket with the 6-10 core samples from the testing area, mix the dirt well and break apart all the clumps. If you have more than one area you are testing, do the same process for each area.



Step 4 - Once all the mixing is complete, spread the soil out in plastic containers or on top of newspapers to dry. Make sure not to mix your different testing areas (if there is more than one) together. Ideally, the soil should have no moisture in it when sending it off to the lab.

Step 5 - Take 1 cup of soil per testing area that you would like to be tested, and place in your zip lock bag. If for example, you are testing 3 different areas, you should have 3 different zip lock bags. (Label each bag you are submitting samples for with either zone, A, B or C, or the actual area ie; lawn, garden, etc.)

Step 6 - Click on the link [soiltesting](#) in order to obtain the proper sample forms to fill out for each sample bag you are sending to obtain the lab address and the pre-payment information. Once you are on the soil testing website, click on "Our Submittal Forms" that are in "red" at the bottom of the page. Finally, click the soil submittal form (PDF), and this will bring you to the submittal form D-494 S20. A routine analysis at \$12.00 per soil sample is usually sufficient for most soil sample testings.

Step 7 - You will receive a detailed soil analysis, once all testing is complete. If you would like to discuss the results with the **Newton County Extension Agent, please email emilee.gerngros@ag.tamu.edu or call 409-379-4831** and we can discuss this further to answer any questions that you may have.

**The laboratory's primary mission is to provide research-based analysis and non-bias recommendations for agronomic and non-agronomic soil analysis, plant tissue analysis, forage nutritive analysis, and non-drinking water analysis. The laboratory also aids the research and extension communities with analysis needs.*



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