

TAKING A SOIL SAMPLE

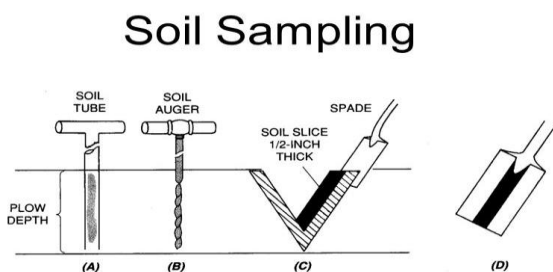
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Monroe County, can test soil pH, soil texture, and levels of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium. The cost is \$15 per sample if paid by cash or check and \$16 if paid by credit card. A soil test does not explore insect, disease, or other cultural problems. Contact our Garden Helpline (473-5335) to help with your problem or submit a plant sample to the Diagnostic Clinic.

TIMING: Most soils should be sampled every 2 – 3 years; more often for sandy soils, high-value crops, or problem areas. To avoid seasonal variation, sample at the same time every year for a given field or garden. Fall is generally considered the most reliable time to collect samples, especially for pH.

SOIL SAMPLING:

- Use clean tools that are free of rust. A plastic trowel is ideal. If possible, use stainless steel probes for a continuous core through the sampling depth (Figure 1).
- Gather a soil sample from 3-4 places at a depth of 4-6 inches for turf, flower, or vegetable gardens and 12-18 inches for trees and shrubs.
- Collect separate samples for different test sites, e.g., a lawn, vegetable garden, or perennial landscaped area (Figure 2). Mix the soil in a container to create a representative sample. Collect at least one cup. Label samples accordingly. If there were recent soil additions, such as lime, sulfur, organic matter, or peat moss, wait 4 or more weeks before submitting the sample.

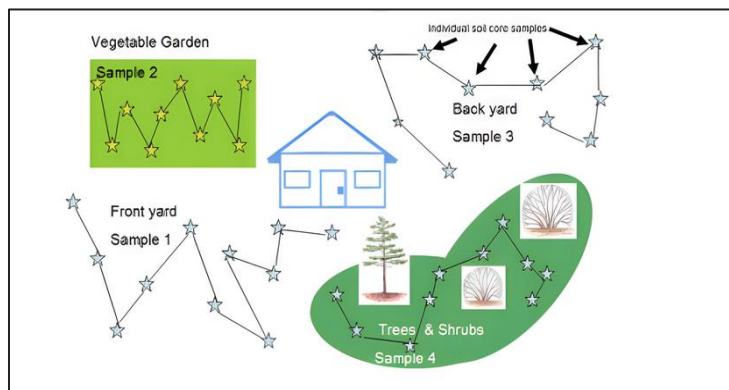
Figure 1.



Sampling with a shovel:

1. Dig out a clean hole.
 2. Shave a thin slice to the proper depth from a side.
 3. Use the center portion of the slice, about 1-inch-wide, for a sub. Sample
- Soil probes and augers are convenient tools for soil sampling.

Figure 2.



For Complete Soil Nutrient Analysis, contact DairyOne with Cornell University at 800-344-2697. You can pick up a submission form in our office. Reports include pH, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, iron, manganese, zinc, and organic matter content, along with recommendations for amendments and fertilizer. Make sure to write in only one code. Codes are listed on the back of the data form. Our office can help interpret results. The soil sample should be placed in the box with the completed data form. For multiple plant or crop recommendations, submit multiple samples. Mail both the data form and the soil box through the post office. Processing turnaround time is 10-14 business days.