

Soil Test



What's a soil test?

A soil test is an easy and inexpensive way to determine your soil's level of nutrients, pH, and organic matter, all of which impact plant growth. A soil test will save you time and money by telling you to **add only what your soil needs**.



Test Results

Your results should arrive in two to three weeks. Request your results be emailed to you for faster results and so you can forward them to your local District or Cooperative Extension if you have questions. Results will include information on:

- Amount of organic matter
- Soil pH
- Levels of the nutrients: phosphorus (P), potassium (K), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), and sulfur (S)
- If there is lead contamination
- Fertilizer and lime needs



When to Test

A soil test should be done at least every three years and before you decide to add any fertilizer or lime to your lawn. The ideal time of year to test your soil is mid to late spring or early fall.

Collect a Sample

- 1. Take several samples** 3" (lawn), 6" (most herbaceous plants), or 12" (trees and shrubs) deep in different locations of a garden or section of yard with a clean trowel. Remove any large leaves, roots, and sticks from your sample.
- 2. Mix the samples** in a clean container. If soil is wet, allow it to dry.
- 3. Label the sample box** with your name, address, and sample identification (e.g. front lawn) and fill with soil. If you are sending samples from discrete areas, each must be placed in a separate sample box.
- 4. Complete the accompanying form.** The form will accommodate up to 10 samples.
- 5. Place the sample box(es), top form, and payment in a mailing container** and send it to the soil testing service at the address on the form.

Soil test kits are available from Cooperative Extension offices, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service offices, or your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

