

Soil Testing and Analysis - Know your Numbers!

Have you been adding the popular brand fertilizer, compost and/or manure to your vegetable garden every year and getting lackluster results?

Perhaps your soil lacks nutrients, has high phosphorus levels, low potassium or the wrong PH.

You can buy the most attractive plants in the greenhouse but they won't produce if your garden soil has a problem!

A soil test is inexpensive, yet the best way to check growing potential and determine which, if any, fertilizers are needed. It eliminates the guesswork about soil chemistry.

Soil testing is a critical part of becoming a successful gardener. Without accurate information concerning the pH of your soil as well as its nitrogen, phosphorus, or potassium levels, there is no way to know what type of fertilizer or how much you should be using.

A soil test from OSU will likely be the best \$10 you ever spent on your garden. Either cash or checks are accepted and it generally takes 2 to 3 weeks to get the results back.



A soil test will provide the pH, N-P-K (nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium levels) of the soil. If you have recently fertilized, you must wait two months before collecting a soil sample for a test.

It is very important how a soil sample is collected and brought into the office so please follow the instructions below:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING A SOIL SAMPLE

1. Using a trowel or similar tool, obtain six inch samples of soil, removing all grass and trash.
2. Each area of interest, such as a lawn or vegetable garden should be tested separately.
3. Obtain at least fifteen (15) or more random sub-samples from the area you want tested. Divide the area and follow a random pattern when sampling. Avoid unusual spots, like a wet area, and try to obtain a representative sample.
4. Place the sub-samples in a plastic bucket, mix thoroughly by hand, and submit a pint (2 cups) of this mixture in a zip-lock bag to the extension office. Samples should not be saturated, but fairly dry.

Bring soil samples to the **OSU Extension Center, 4116 E. 15th St.**, (on 15th, between Harvard and Yale) or call 918-746-3701 for more information. Soil Test Request forms are available in the OSU Extension Office. The Extension office will mail your samples to the OSU Soil, Water and Forage Analytical Laboratory for testing and then mail written recommendations to you.

Beside the Routine Soil Test, OSU offers water and other kinds of testing. [Follow this link.](#)