

## **How to Take a Soil Sample**



Illustration from Cleveland County Discussion of Soil Testing

A Soil Sample Analysis provides gardeners with specific information. This information details what type of fertilizer applications need to be made and whether an adjustment of pH, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium is needed to enrich garden beds, thus making soil nutrients available to plants for uptake. Targeted amendments save money, make your soil more productive, and prevent the over application of unnecessary chemicals. [OSU Fact Sheet PSS-2207](#) describe in more detail the soil test process.

OSU and other universities recommend 15-20 cores (e.g., samples) should be taken from random areas and from a depth of about 6" to provide a representative of the area to be planted.

Once the cores have been taken, they need to be collected in a clean plastic bucket, then mixed together by hand. Remove twigs and other "garden trash." Using plastic prevents contamination from a metal bucket. Mixing the samples together gives an average of the area that will be planted.

About a pint, or half of a quart zip-lock bag, is sufficient for the soil analysis. The Soil Test for home gardeners measures soil pH, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. If you wish to test both the lawn and a garden or flower bed, it is best to separate those samples so the most accurate analysis can be made for each area.

OSU charges \$10 for each sample analysis. Bring your soil samples along with a check for the fee to the OSU Extension Center located at 4116 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street in Tulsa (Tulsa Fairgrounds Gate #6). You may also call (918) 746-3701 for further instructions.