



UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory

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UConn
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
HEALTH AND NATURAL
RESOURCES
PLANT SCIENCE AND LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE

SOIL SAMPLING INSTRUCTIONS

FOR HOMEGROUNDS, LANDSCAPERS & LAWNS

Note: Soil tests aid in diagnosing only those problems resulting from a lack or excess of certain plant nutrients and/or incorrect soil pH (level of acidity or alkalinity). Other factors that may adversely affect plant growth include soil drainage, rainfall, amount of sunlight, insects, plant diseases, weeds, winter injury and misuse of pesticides or other chemicals. None of these is identified by a soil test. For questions on these types of problems, contact the [UConn Home & Garden Education Center](#) at (877) 486-6271 or the [UConn Plant Diagnostic Lab](#).

You typically will receive soil test results and fertilizer recommendations within 7 to 10 business days from receipt of your sample except during our busy months of April and May when it may take 14 business days or more. **Do not apply more than the recommended amount of fertilizer.** Too much nitrogen and/or phosphorus can pollute ground and surface waters.

Limestone and fertilizer recommendations based on improperly taken soil samples may be inaccurate and possibly, harmful to plants. Follow the instructions below to obtain a **representative sample**. Submit **one cup** of soil for the standard nutrient analysis and **two cups** if additional tests, like organic matter or soil texture, are also requested.

Filling out the soil sample submission form:

1. Please fill out the homegrounds, landscapers & lawns submission form to accompany your sample(s) and print it. It is especially important to list the **crop codes** for which recommendations are wanted. We cannot make recommendations without knowing the crop being grown.
2. Areas differing in appearance, slope, drainage, limestone or fertilizer treatments or intended plant usage should be sampled and tested separately. Examples:
 - a. The lawn should be sampled separately from the vegetable garden.
 - b. The blueberry patch should be sampled separately from the perennial garden.
 - c. Areas under shade trees should be sampled separately from the lawn surrounding them.
 - d. That portion of the vegetable garden recently limed or fertilized should be sampled separately from the portion not limed or fertilized.
 - e. Wait one month after compost or manure is added to garden beds before testing the soil.
 - f. The upslope, dry part of the lawn should be sampled separately from the downslope, wet part of the lawn.

- g. Areas around shrubs should be sampled separately from the lawn.
- 3. Where poor growth exists, take samples from both the good and bad areas, if possible, and submit them separately.
- 4. If there is a question you would like the horticulturists at the UConn Home & Garden Education Center to address, please list it on the bottom of the form or on a separate sheet of paper.
- 5. Commercial lawn care professionals or landscapers submitting 10 or more soil samples at one time may be interested in our **multi-sample discount policy**.

When and how to sample:

- 1. Samples may be collected any time of year the ground is not frozen. The waiting period for results is longest in April and May. Testing the soil in the fall is highly recommended.
- 2. Using a spade, trowel or bulb planter, collect cores or thin slices of soil from 10 or more random, evenly distributed spots in your sample area, to the appropriate depth indicated.
 - a. Grass 3 to 4 inches
 - b. Flowers, vegetables, small fruits 6 to 8 inches
 - c. Trees and shrubs 8 to 10 inches
- 3. Put the slices or cores of soil into a clean container and thoroughly mix them. Transfer at least **ONE CUP** of the soil mixture to a plastic zippered bag and seal.
- 4. Label each plastic bag on the **outside** (using a permanent marker) with the name of the sample area (sample ID).
- 5. Place the plastic bag in a mailing envelop or small box along with the sample submission form and a check made payable to University of Connecticut (\$12/sample for standard nutrient analysis) and mail it to:

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