



Soil Sampling Procedures

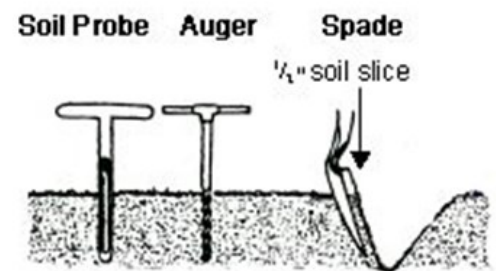
A soil test is only as accurate as the sample taken. Follow these instructions below for the best results.

SAMPLING TOOLS

Tools that may be used to take a soil sample include a soil-sampling probe, an auger, or a spade.

Tools should be either stainless steel or chrome-plated to avoid contamination of the sample.

Preferably, collect in a clean, dry plastic container as soil may pick up zinc for example, if the container is galvanized.



DETERMINING THE AREA TO BE SAMPLED

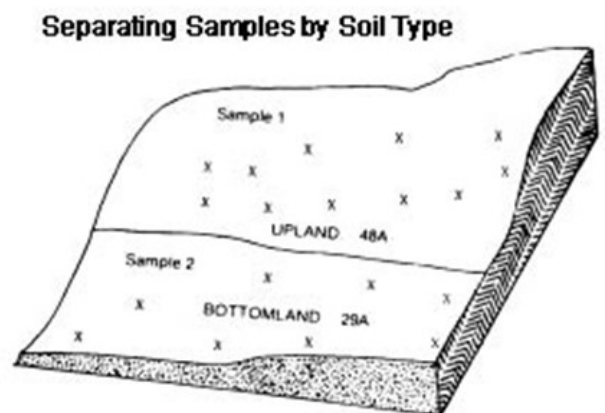
If you have a garden, lawn, pasture or orchard that is amended and treated relatively the same, one soil sample will be needed. One soil sample should contain soil from several spots throughout the area you are testing. If there are areas that differ in soil texture, drainage, plant growth, or crop type, then these should be sampled separately to get accurate results and recommendations. Thurston Conservation District can provide technical assistance for distinguishing areas or determining the number of samples.

HOW TO COLLECT A SAMPLE

The soil sample collected should be a combination of soil from 7 to 12 random locations within a selected area. See the picture to right for an example of taking a soil sample for a pasture or lawn. When collecting each subsample, remove any plant material (grass, roots, and crop residue) on the top 1-2 inches then sample to the depth of the root zone or tillage.

For vegetable production, sample to the depth of 6-8 inches or to the depth of tillage. For pastures and lawns, sample to the depth of 6 inches. For fruit trees, sample to the depth of 9 inches and remove the top 2 inches.

Stay at least 50 feet away from barns, roads, lanes, or fence rows when sampling fields. Unless of specific interest, avoid dead furrows, corners of fields, end rows, and areas that are poorly drained or have had fertilizers or amendments dumped on them.



Soil Sampling Procedures Continued

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SUBMITTING YOUR SAMPLE

After you've collected all of your samples from 7 to 12 random locations, mix all of the samples thoroughly and combined into a clean plastic container or plastic ziploc bag. The samples should be a total of 4 cups of soil. Refrigerate the sample until you are able to bring it into the Thurston Conservation District off to submit the sample and pay for our service.

The Thurston Conservation District office for soil sample submission Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 4:15 pm during the week. We send out our soil samples to the lab every Thursday afternoon by 1:00 pm. If you'd like your soil sample sent out that week, please have it in by Thursday by 12:00 pm. Otherwise, it will be sent out the following week.

Our address is:
Thurston Conservation District
2918 Ferguson St SW STE A
Tumwater, WA 98512

Please allow up to 2 weeks turnaround time for your results and recommendations to be received in an email. Please let us know at the time of drop off if you'd like to receive your results by mail instead. We accept cash or check at time of drop-off for payment of services.

If you have any questions, please give us a call at 360-754-3588 extension 100 for more information.

