



Check out our Instructional Video:

SOIL TESTS

www.GrowOrganic.com

Soil Test Guidelines *How to take a good soil sample*

In order for a soil test to be reliable, the sample tested must be representative of the soil condition of the area. The number of soil samples required must be determined by the grower based on the economics of the crop being grown and visual irregularities that show up due to varying soil types and their conditions. You should consider that it is equally important to know why a crop grows well as it is to know why it grows poorly. Any soil analysis is only as good as the sample tested. Hence, it is important to take a truly representative and unbiased sample of the area in question.

The important guidelines for taking soil samples:

1. Soils that differ in soil type, appearance, drainage, crop growth or past treatment should be sampled separately, provided the areas can be fertilized separately. Avoid areas or soil conditions that are different, such as lime piles, manure piles, fertilizer spills, gate areas, livestock congregation areas, poorly drained areas, tillage or fertilizer corners, barns, roads or fence rows.
2. Use a clean trowel or shovel to take the sample. Don't use brass, soft steel or your hands to take a sample.
3. Scrape away surface debris or litter and dig a cone-shaped hole to a depth of approximately 6". Then, cut a vertical cross section of the soil sample, from the surface all the way down to the sample depth.
4. Avoid varied depth of samples, combining unlike areas into one composite sample, or combining like soil areas with different past fertilizing or liming.
5. Take about a dozen cross sections for each soil test. If you are not testing in a raised bed, try to make the sample distances about 5 - 10 ft. apart. Mix them thoroughly in a clean plastic or paper container, don't use rubber or galvanized steel as that could contaminate the soil. Fill sample bag to the line with this mixture. Send about 1 pound of soil.
6. Preferably, the soil should not be sampled if it is much wetter than you would want it for tilling. If it is wet, allow it to air dry, away from the sun. Soil should never be dried with heat. Don't put wet soil in sample bag—it will mold.
7. Don't touch soil with hands or contaminated equipment. Don't use galvanized, soft steel or brass equipment for sampling. Don't put soil in metal bucket because the zinc affects the soil test.
8. Return the sample bag with soil to us; do not ship it directly to the lab.
9. For samples not originating within the lower 48 states please call for special shipping instructions as required by the USDA.

If you send the sample by **U.S. mail**, the address is:

Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply

P.O. Box 2209, Grass Valley, CA 95945

If you send the sample by **UPS** or **FedEx**, the address is:

Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply

125 Clydesdale Court, Grass Valley, CA 95945

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P.O. Box 2209 • 125 Clydesdale Court • Grass Valley, CA 95945

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