

## Soil Sampling

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The laboratory offers sampling bags, free of charge, to customers at the laboratory. If you would like sampling bags sent to you, please contact the laboratory. Soil samples can be collected using any plastic bag but must be properly labeled. Containers, such as coolers, will not be returned unless previous arrangements have been made with the laboratory.

1. Soil samples can be collected using a clean probe, spade or shovel. A soil probe allows samples to be taken from an accurate depth. If using a spade or shovel, insert the spade to the desired depth then re-insert the spade next to the first opening to create a slice. Remove the soil slice and make a one (1) inch core strip from the entire slice, removing any plant matter that may be at the top.\*
2. Samples should be taken from the desired depth of the project. Often, surface sample depths of 0 – 8 inches are used to measure nutrients within the root zone, although deeper sub samples can be taken to measure mobile nutrients. These depths may include 8 – 24 inches or greater.
3. Collect a representative sample from the area and place in a plastic bucket to mix cores. Be sure to sample from areas with similar soil types, topographies and covers. Avoid problem areas that do not accurately represent your soil. If desired, test these areas separately to determine potential soil issues.
4. Common methods of soil sampling include random composite sampling and grid sampling. Random composite sampling can include selecting sites throughout a field with no organization. A composite sample of ten (10) to fifteen (15) cores combined may represent a 40-acre area. Grid sampling can be a field that has been divided into equal areas and eight (8) to ten (10) cores taken from those areas, mixed and submitted as one sample for that area.
5. Clearly label all the sample bags with unique identifiers such as a location or a number. These labels must match the label names used on the submittal form and must indicate the desired test in addition to necessary customer information (i.e. Name, Address, Email, and Phone Number). This form is accessible on our website.  
**\*Hint:** Label bags using a Sharpie or pen prior to sampling to prevent labels from smearing.
6. Submit the samples to the laboratory as soon as possible.

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\*Avoid using brass, bronze or galvanized tools and clean sampling tools, as this can cause contaminated samples and incorrect results.