

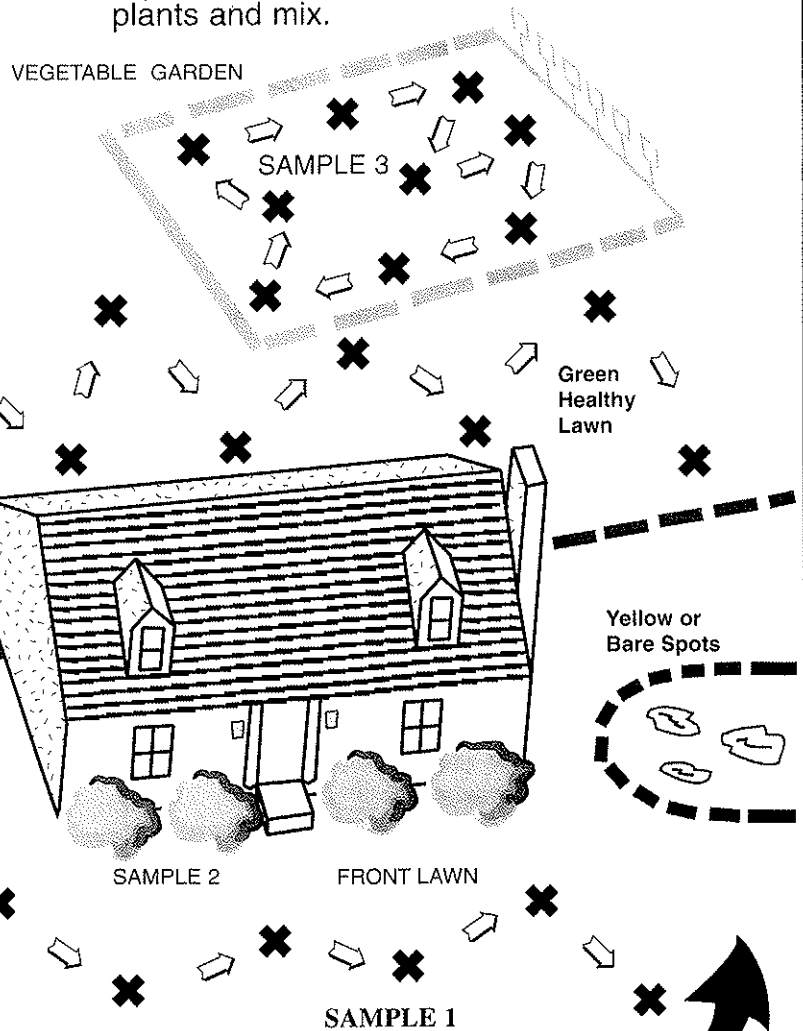
SOIL TESTING

Soil tests such as those conducted by the University of Georgia Soil Testing and Plant Analysis Laboratory will help you develop and maintain a more productive soil by providing information about the fertility status of your soil. Information obtained from a soil test will help you select the proper timing and fertilization program to obtain optimal growth of lawn, garden and ornamental plants.

One of the most important steps in soil testing is collecting the sample. Soil test results can be no better than the sample submitted to the laboratory for analysis. A soil sample weighing about one pound represents thousands of pounds of soil in the landscape or garden. Therefore it is extremely important that soil samples be properly and carefully taken.

A Good Soil Sample Should Be Representative of the Area

- Take soil from a minimum of 10 random locations (X) in the sampled area and mix together in a clean bucket.
- For trees and shrubs, take soil from six to eight spots around the dripline of the plants and mix.

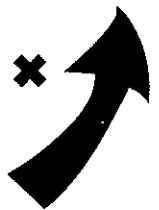


Each Soil Sample Should Represent One Soil Condition

Areas which have been treated differently should be sampled separately. In the above example four samples should be taken - one each from the garden, the lawn, the ornamental shrubs in the landscape and the azaleas. If the front and back lawns have been treated differently or if they are seeded with different grasses, take a separate sample from each.

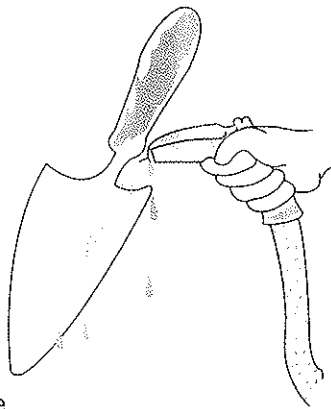
Identify Problem Areas With Soil Tests

- Areas where plants grow differently and/or the soil appears different should be sampled separately.



Do not contaminate The Sample

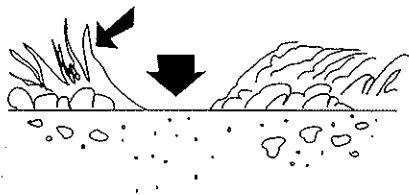
- Use clean sampling tools and containers.



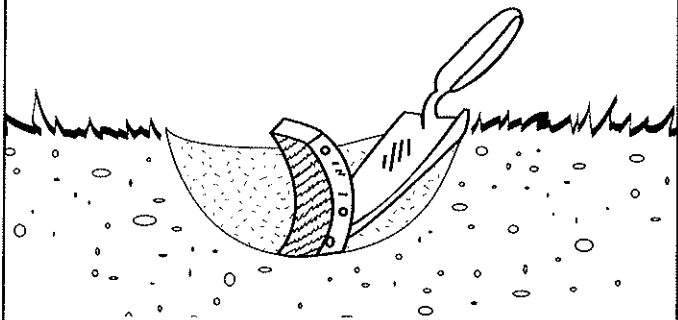
- Never use tools or containers that have been used for fertilizer or limestone. A small amount of residue on tools or containers can cause serious sample contamination.

Sample to the Proper Depth

- Remove any surface litter such as turf thatch or mulch.



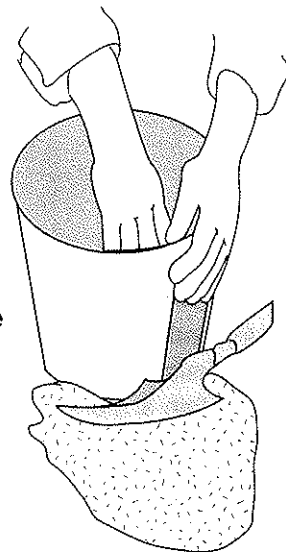
- For lawns, sample to a depth of four inches. For gardens, ornamentals and fruit trees sample to a depth of six inches.



- Use a trowel, spade or sampling tube to collect soil sample. To use a trowel or spade, push the tool to the desired depth into the soil. Then push the handle forward, with the trowel or spade still in the soil to make a wide opening. Cut a thin slice from the side of the opening that is of uniform thickness, approximately 1/4" inch thick and two inches in width, extending from the top of the ground to the depth of the cut. Scrape away any grass thatch or mulch and place the slice of soil into a clean bucket or other container. After the soil is taken, remove the shovel or spade and let the soil fall back into place.

Soil Samples Should Be Carefully Mixed and Packaged

- Do not use sample bags other than those provided by the University of Georgia Soil Testing and Plant Analysis Laboratory. All cores taken for a given sample should be collected in a clean bucket and thoroughly mixed.
- Fill the soil sample bag to the indicated line with the mixed soil.



- Supply all the information asked for on the soil sample bag. List your Name and Address, Plant to be grown, Sample Number (please use a simple code and do not exceed 3 digits -- e.g. 1, 2, 3, ..., 20, 21, 22, ..., 321, 322, 32A, 32B...) and your county. This information is essential for the return of your sample results and fertilizer recommendations to the proper Extension Office. On the bag, indicate test desired by checking the proper box. For lawns, gardens and shrubs, a routine test will suffice. If a special analysis, e.g. zinc (Zn), manganese (Mn), boron (B), is needed, first consult your local County Extensions office for mailing to the laboratory. Soil sample bags are available at your County Extension office.

