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TAKING A SOIL SAMPLE...THE CORRECT WAY

“Liming and fertilizing without a soil test is like building a home without a blueprint.”

Fertilizer and lime are most effective when used in proper amounts. Soil tests provide a scientific basis for correct usage. If you fail to follow the recommendations, you cannot expect to get top yields and returns.

For most situations (lawns, vegetable garden, ornamentals, etc.) the soil should be sampled every 2 to 3 years. For situations involving high-value cash crops or soils under intensive use, it is recommended that the soil be tested prior to planting the crop.

Soil samples may be taken at any time during the year, however, avoid extremely wet soil conditions unless absolutely necessary. It is recommended that successive samples from a given situation be taken at about the same time of the year.

- 1. Using a garden spade or shovel (if available a soil probe or auger works best) slice into the soil to a depth of six inches.**
- 2. Take a one-inch thick slice of soil from the side of the hole. Repeat this process to obtain 5-10 samples, randomly taken, depending on the size of your lawn or garden.**
- 3. Combine all samples into a clean container and mix thoroughly, removing any plant debris or stones. ONE CUP OF SOIL IS ALL THAT IS NEEDED FOR TESTING.**
- 4. If your soil is wet, you will need to let it dry. Let it dry naturally. DO NOT dry in a conventional or microwave oven.**
- 5. Label samples for proper identification (i.e. back yard, vegetable garden). Include your name, address, daytime phone and email.**

Samples can be brought to the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Canajoharie for testing. The cost is \$2.00 per sample for pH testing.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities