

# Soil Sampling: Test Now to Amend Soil for Spring

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## Soil Sample Pricing \*pricing subject to change

1 Sample - \$19.00	6 Samples - \$84.00
2 Samples - \$29.00	7 Samples - \$90.00
3 Samples - \$45.00	8 Samples - \$100.00
4 Samples - \$54.50	9 Samples - \$110.00
5 Samples - \$64.00	10 Samples - \$120.00



# Soil Sampling: Test Now to Amend Soil for Spring

## SUBMITTING TO A&L LABS

Your local Extension Office can submit soil samples for you to A&L Labs. Typical turn around for results is 10-14 days.

## BASIC ANALYSIS

Measures the organic matter, available phosphorus, exchangeable Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium, Soil pH, Cation Exchange Capacity, Percent Base Saturation of Cation Elements.

## TESTING YOUR SOIL

In a soil test elements are chemically removed from the soil and measured for their available content to the plant. The quantity of the nutrients in the sample determines the amount of fertilizer that is recommended. Soil tests also measure soil PH, humic matter and exchangeable acidity. Soil tests can be taken at any time, the important thing to remember is to take the sample at the same time every year! It is however, recommended to take it in the fall when application of fertilizers is possible.

## HOW TO TAKE THE SAMPLE

First, using a sample probe, (available for loan at our office) spade, trowel or long knife, dig 6-8 inches deep for gardens, shrubs or trees and 3-4 inches for turf. Sample different areas of the turf, garden or landscape separately. Choose 8-10 locations to extract soil from (more if its a large area). Discard any surface residue, thatch or stone. Second, combine the samples in a bucket and mix well. Transfer 1-2 cups of the mixed sample to our provided bag or a plastic bag. Label the bag with location, the address and your contact information. Finally, drop your soil sample at the extension office with your payment (we can only accept cash or check), we'll take care of the rest. We can email your results, call you for pickup or mail them. Let us know your preferred method.



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## HELPFUL HINTS REGARDING SOIL TESTING

A little more information regarding soil testing: Most labs do not include a nitrogen test because soils do not retain nitrogen, so it must be replenished every year. Some gardening books advise a general lime application, yet most Indiana gardens have a soil pH that is already near neutral, if not slightly alkaline. So, applying lime will not help (and may hurt) nutrient availability in these soils. You should test your soil every three to five years. However, if you have specific plants with particular fertility and soil pH requirements, test more often. Be sure to collect your soil sample and test it well before you plant, so you have time to treat the soil. You can sample soil any time the soil is suitable for spading or rototilling, but late summer or early fall give enough lead time to plan ahead. However, if a situation develops that suggests soil fertility may be the problem, then you should collect samples immediately. Taking soil samples from the "normal" and "abnormal" plant growth areas is helpful for comparison.