

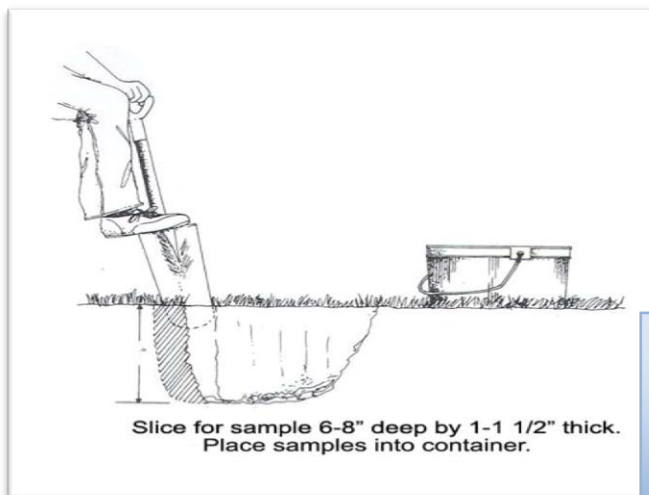
## Lawn and Garden Soil Testing

The Douglas County Extension Council provides lawn and garden soil testing through Kansas State University. A routine or basic soil test measures the need for phosphorus, potassium and pH adjustment. There is an \$8.00\* fee to cover lab expenses. The Douglas County Soil Conservation District sometimes provides grant money to help pay for a limited number of soil tests for Douglas County residents. Optional tests for nitrogen, organic matter, minor elements, and soluble salts can be requested at additional cost.

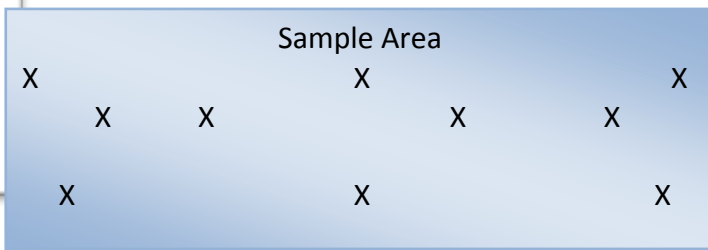
Soil testing gives you accurate information about the type and amount of fertilizer to apply to maintain good plant health. Using the right fertilizer can save you time and money, and reduce the potential for runoff.

Test soil every 3-5 years; annual tests are not required unless an extreme deficiency is revealed. If organic fertilizer recommendations are desired, please indicate this when you submit your sample for testing. If special plants, such as azaleas or blueberries, are to be grown, this should be indicated also.

### Sampling Procedure



Identify a uniform area and take 10 or more columns or slices at random from the area to be tested. Use a coring device, trowel, spade, knife or other tool to collect slender cores or slices of soil. Take slices 6-8 inches deep for gardens and flower beds; 3-4 inches deep for established lawns; and 8-10 inches deep for trees and shrubs.



Combine, crumble and blend the columns or cores thoroughly in a clean container, removing any stones, grass, roots, or thatch. Put one pint (2 cups) of the mixed soil in a plastic bag or small clean container and bring it to K-State Research and Extension – Douglas County, 2110 Harper St, Lawrence, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

You will be asked to complete a form when you drop off the sample. To give you the best recommendations, we need to know what you want to grow, your current fertilization practices, the approximate size of the area, and any special problems.

Create separate samples for each area you want to have tested. Lawns, gardens, trees, and shrubs all have different nutrient requirements, so separate samples by what you are growing or what you want to grow in that area.

### **Precautions**

Avoid taking samples when the soil is very wet. Samples which are wet should be spread out on a newspaper to dry. Do not dry the sample artificially.

Do not contaminate the sample with soil from small areas which are abnormal or different, such as backfill ditches, where brush piles have been burned, or under shrubs which have been given extra fertilizer. If a test of soil from these areas is desired, it should constitute a separate sample. If a lawn or garden has two or more distinctly different types of soil, such as fill-soil in one area and native soil in another, make separate samples.

Do not submit samples that are 100 percent compost. Compost cannot be tested in the same manner as soil. Kansas State University's soil testing laboratory does not offer this service.

### **The Results**

A report of results and recommendations will be sent to you as soon as they are complete. The normal waiting period is 2-3 weeks. During peak periods, longer delays may occur. To avoid delays, submit samples anytime throughout summer or winter, and avoid the rush periods of March-May and August-September.

### **Note**

Soil tests detect shortages of major plant nutrients which affect growth and development of plants. The test does not identify or measure insects, soil-borne diseases, pesticide residues, or other contaminants.

Special situations and/or crops may require special tests. Please consult the County Extension Agent when necessary.

\*Only cash and checks are accepted at this time for payment.

**K-State Research and Extension – Douglas County**

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