



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

How to Collect Soil Samples for Testing

Developed by Traci Johnson, Oldham County Agriculture Extension Agent

Collect soil for testing using the following guidelines:

- For plowed or tilled areas - collect soil from top 6 - 8 inches of soil.
- For non-tilled areas (lawn, pasture, no-till and minimum till-crops) - collect soil from the top 3 - 4 inches of soil.
- Avoid collecting soil from areas where nutrient levels may be skewed (livestock feeding areas, compost piles, tree driplines, areas adjacent to streets or areas where deicers have been applied)
- Consider sampling problem areas separately. For example, if there is variation in soil type or drainage characteristics in one part of a yard vs. another, then submit a soil sample from each area.
- Use a clean, dry plastic bucket to collect samples. Do not use rubber or galvanized buckets to collect or mix soil.
- Collect soil randomly across entire area (field, lawn, garden, pasture, etc.) and mix to represent each area soil sample. Pulling soil from only 1 or 2 spots may not give an accurate representation of soil nutrient levels. Pulling soil randomly from across entire area will give more accurate results.
- Remove twigs, grass, leaves, etc. from sample.
- Allow soil to air-dry. Do not artificially dry samples.
- Bring enough soil to fill a zip-lock sandwich bag to our office for testing. Office is located at 207 Parker Drive, La Grange.
- The current fee is \$10.00 per sample for testing services at Oldham County Extension. Vouchers may be available to cover this fee from the Oldham County Conservation District.
- Residents may borrow soil probes for sampling. This is a time saving tool when sampling many areas/fields.
- Questions? Call 502-222-9453.

