

HOW TO TAKE A SOIL SAMPLE

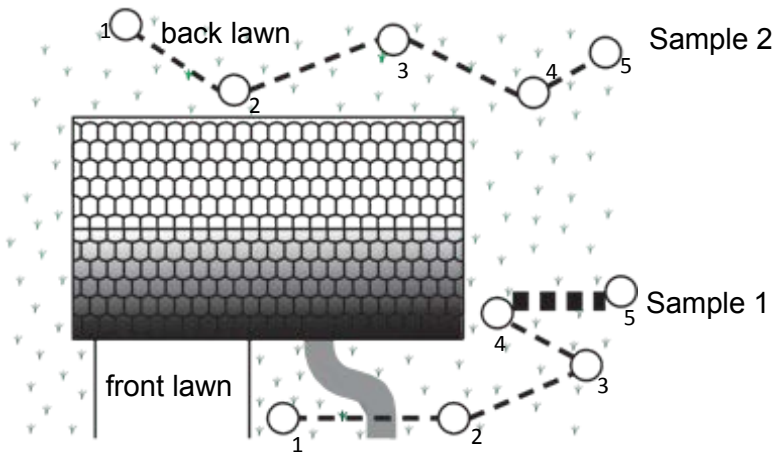
The quality of your results depends largely on the quality of your sample. For best results, please follow these instructions.

WHEN

Soil samples may be collected and submitted at any time of the year. Waiting to submit after collection won't significantly affect your results.

WHERE

- Sample areas that are similar in appearance, topography, and use. For example, sample a garden separately from a lawn. Or a hilly area separately from a flat area. You may want to sample the front lawn and the back lawn separately (see diagram).
- Sample areas of concern separately (trouble spots, near buildings, under trees, etc.).



HOW

- Use a garden trowel, shovel, spade, auger, etc.
- Scrape away surface litter, grass, or leaves.
- Collect 4-6 samples based on these depths:
 - existing grass - 0-3"
 - new grass - 0-6"
 - gardens - 0-6"
 - trees & shrubs - 0-12"
- Place the samples from that area into a clean bucket or pan.
- Mix together and place into a plastic baggie or used food container, etc., and submit as a composite sample (2-3 cups).
- Label the container with a sample name.

TESTS

- **Regular Test:** includes percent organic matter, phosphorus, potassium, pH (lime if needed), estimated texture and provides NPK recommendation.
- **Soluble Salts:** request if
 - "black dirt" has been used and poor growth is observed,
 - there is possible damage from salt from roads/sidewalks, or excessive fertilizer.
 - grass looks burned, even when adequate water is present,
 - soil is poorly drained and located in south central or western parts of Minnesota.
- **Lead Test:** Select only if lead contamination is suspected. Sample only the surface 3/4" for play areas, and surface to 3-4" for gardens. **Send a separate sample if you are also requesting a Regular Test.**

HOW TO SUBMIT SAMPLES

Place samples in a mailer/box. Include the request form and payment (do not put them inside touching the soil because the paperwork gets soggy). Use a separate sheet for each sample, though you may send one check for multiple samples. Make checks payable to the University of Minnesota. **Do not send cash!** The University of Minnesota will not be responsible for cash sent through the mail. Or pay with a credit card. *Prices effective January 2024. Visit z.umn.edu/lawn-garden for current prices.*

Mail the samples or deliver to (park along the curb in front of the building):

Soil Testing and Research Analytical Laboratory

University of Minnesota
135 Crops Research Building
1902 Dudley Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108

Mon-Fri 8:00am - 4:30pm
soiltest@umn.edu
612-625-3101
z.umn.edu/soiltest

