



## HOW TO TAKE A SOIL SAMPLE

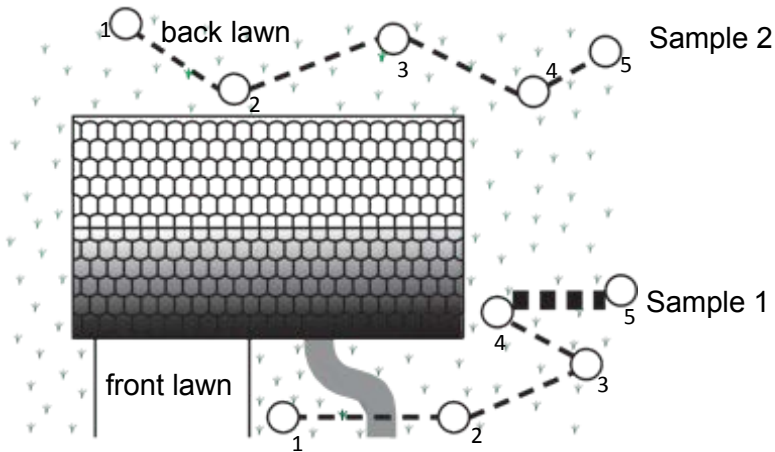
The quality of your results depends largely on the quality of your sample. For best results, please follow these instructions.

### 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](http://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

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