

SOIL TESTING

Soil testing is a tool used to help make informed decisions about the management of soil nutrients – whether for a garden, lawn, field or forest. Soil tests provide information on fertilizer needs, helping to save money and time. Soil tests can also help protect the environment from contaminated runoff or groundwater pollution caused by over-fertilization.

Clallam Conservation District offers a low-cost soil testing service to residents of Clallam County. For \$28 per sample, soil will be tested for:

- pH
- Nitrate-nitrogen
- Phosphate
- Potassium
- Magnesium
- Calcium
- Sodium
- Organic matter
- Cation exchange capacity



Planners at the Conservation District will help you interpret the results and help you determine an appropriate schedule for applying the nutrients needed for your crops.



CLALLAM CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Steps to Getting Your Soil Tested

Use this brochure as a guide to sample the soil from the area that you would like tested. If you need any help with this process please call or stop by our office.

Return your soil to the Clallam Conservation District office on the **1st or 3rd Wednesday** of the month, along with **\$28 per sample** to cover the costs of the lab testing.

When we receive your soil test results from the lab, generally within 14 to 20 days, we will email or mail back the results to you. We will then help you interpret the results by phone, or in-person at our office, and determine how to proceed with any recommendations made by the soil-testing lab.

When To Take a Soil Test

Soil tests should be taken in the spring or fall for established sites, and at any time of year for new seedlings and plantings. Taking a soil test every two to three years is usually adequate to monitor nutrient levels; however, if management practices change, testing more frequently may be necessary.

Where to Take a Soil Test

Avoid sampling unusual spots, such as manure piles or swampy areas. Separate samples should be taken if areas are managed differently; or if crop, soil type, or slope are different.

Supplies Needed

- Spade, shovel or soil probe*
- Knife
- Bucket
- Plastic gallon zipper-bag



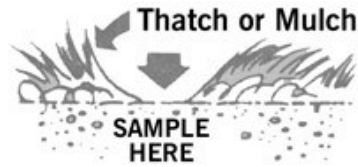
Be sure supplies are clean to avoid contaminating the sample.

* Soil Probes are available for check-out at our office.

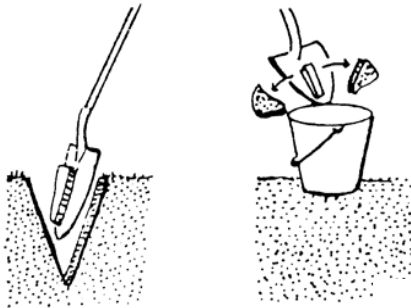
CLALLAM CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Taking a Soil Sample

Step 1: Remove vegetation and organic material on the surface of the area to be sampled.

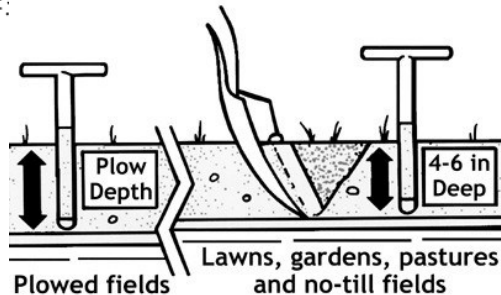


Step 2: Take soil samples to the correct depth



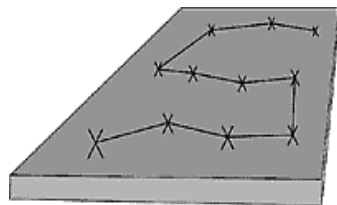
If you use a shovel and a knife, dig a hole 4 to 6 inches deep. Take a slice of soil ½ inch thick and 4 to 6 inches deep and keep it on the shovel. From the center of this slice, cut a strip one-half inch wide from top to bottom and put it in the bucket.

Typically sample lawns, gardens, pastures and no-till fields at a depth of 4-6 inches and plowed fields to the plow depth.



Step 3: Take a representative sample

Follow step 2 to obtain 10 to 15 subsamples in your bucket, taken from random locations within the sampling area.



Step 4: Mix and package the soil sample

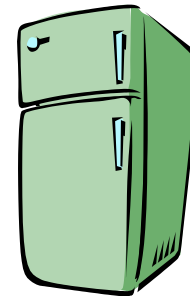


Thoroughly mix the subsamples in the bucket. Break up any large clumps of soil. Remove extra debris such as rocks and roots.

Fill the gallon plastic zipper-bag at least 1/2 full of soil.



Step 5: Bring your soil sample to our office the 1st or 3rd Wednesday of the month between 9:00am to 4:00 pm. The results will be back in about 14-20 days.



Place your soil sample in the refrigerator if you can't get it to us within 24 hours. This prevents continued breakdown of nutrients, which can lead to inaccurate test results.