

NOBLE NEWS & VIEWS

SOILS

Test Your Soil Before Applying Lime, Fertilizer

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Before applying lime and fertilizers, your first step should be taking a soil sample for testing. Testing offers information that can lead to more informed decision-making and ultimately greater productivity and profitability. We like to say, “Unless you test, it’s just a guess.”

WHEN SHOULD I SAMPLE MY SOIL?
Early spring is a good time to take soil

samples for summer crops. Summer is a good time to sample for fall and winter crops. To assess nitrogen availability in the soil, sample as close to planting as possible.

For lawns, spring (April) is a good time to sample for warm-season grass. This will ensure your test results will be back in time to fertilize in May. Summer-time (mid-August) is good for cool-season grasses.



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A STRATEGY FOR COLLECTING SAMPLES

Improperly collected soil samples are the weak link in the soil testing process. For test results to be useful, the sample must accurately reflect the variability and conditions in the field. A sample from a single spot cannot achieve this. Steps for taking a good soil sample:

A

Before sampling, make a detailed map of your land. For small areas, simply draw a diagram. For large tracts, aerial photographs may be helpful.

B

Divide the map into individual sample areas of 40 acres or less. Assign a short, permanent sample identification name to each area that will help you remember its location.

C

Each sample area should consist of only one general soil type or condition. If a field varies in slope, color, drainage or texture, and if those areas can be fertilized separately, submit a separate sample for each area.

D

If the field being sampled has been divided into sections, submit a sample for each section – even if you now plan to grow the same crop across the entire field. Areas where liming or fertilizing patterns have differed from the rest of the field should also be sampled separately. 🐾