UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

IFAS Analytical Services Laboratories
Extension Soil Testing Laboratory

PO Box 110740 / Wallace Building 631, UF / Gainesville, FL 32611-0740
EMAIL: SOILSLAB@IFAS.UFL.EDU WEBSITE: SOILSLAB.IFAS.UFL.EDU

Landscape & Vegetable Garden Test Information Sheet

Note: This Lab Only Tests Samples from the State of Florida.

Mailing Address (please print)

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address _____

City _____ **FL** **Zip** _____

Date _____ **E-Mail** * _____

Direct any questions regarding this test or the interpretation of the results to your county Extension Agent.

*** In order to expedite reporting of results; please provide an e-mail address if possible.**

NOTE: ~ Consult an expert to determine if plant growth problems require soil testing.
~ These samples will NOT be tested for nematodes, disease organisms or chemicals other than those listed on this form.
~ Commercial producers should use the Producers Soil Test Information Sheet, SL-135.

Step 1. Collect samples from your landscape or garden. See the instructions at the bottom of this page.

Step 2. Select EITHER Test **A** or **B**, **but not both**, for any sample.

For Micronutrients: Cu, Mn, Zn add $5 per sample.

Test A. The pH and Lime Requirement Test will give you the following information.
* Soil pH
*Lime Requirement

Test A is especially for you if you:
1) use only complete fertilizers (such as 16-4-8),
2) follow the generic fertilizer recommendations in IFAS landscape and vegetable garden publications, or
3) need only the soil pH test.

Test B. The Soil Fertility Test will give you these 6 analyses

* Soil pH * P * Ca
* Lime Requirement * K * Mg

Test B will enable you to tailor your use of single-element fertilizers based on existing soil fertility status. However, if you use a complete fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, the extra tests for extractable P, K, Mg, and Ca are of little value.

Fill in all requested information, using one line per sample and additional sheets for more than 5 samples.

Remember: Choose only one test for each sample.

Lab Use Only	Sample ID	County	Crop Code(s) See Page 2 (or back).	Estimated Acreage	Cost of Test A	Cost of Test B
					(Circle appropriate amount.)	
					$3.00	$7.00
					$3.00	$7.00
					$3.00	$7.00
					$3.00	$7.00
					$3.00	$7.00

Please enclose payment and this sheet in the same package as sample(s)

Please make checks and money order payable to UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Check_____ **Money Order**_____ **Cash**_____ **Total**_____

Samples will not be processed without payment. Do not send cash through the mail.

How to Sample Your Lawn or Garden

Obtain a small amount of soil from 10-15 different spots over the area you wish to test (a minimum of one-half pint). When you sample a lawn, take the soil from the upper 2-4 inches. When sampling a vegetable garden or landscape plants, take soil from the upper six inches. If soil is wet, spread soil on clean paper or other suitable material to air dry.

Figure 1a. Use a soil probe to speed soil sampling, or...

Figure 1b. Use a hand trowel, shovel or other garden tool. Trim out soil of uniform thickness to the recommended depth.

Figure 2. Place 10 to 15 soil cores into a plastic bucket; mix, dry, and transfer to a bag.

Information and Crop Codes for Landscape & Vegetable Garden Test Information Sheet

Relationship of Soil Testing to Lawn Maintenance or Vegetable Gardening

Single-Element Fertilizers and Complete Fertilizers

Each of us has a unique opinion about lawn or landscape care or garden productivity because we each have different skills, background training, and experiences. This diversity shows in the management levels that can be observed within any neighborhood. Some techniques are universal, founded upon scientific principles. Other techniques are Asecret recipes@ for producing the best lawn or the biggest tomatoes. But the majority of us have found that we are able to grow beautiful lawns and productive gardens by applying the UF/IFAS-recommended amount of a complete fertilizer (a fertilizer that contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium). This method of fertilization saves time and effort for most homeowners when compared to the use of single-element fertilizers. If you use complete fertilizers, then testing only for soil pH and lime requirement is your best testing plan. A soil fertility test is worth the extra fee only if you have access to single-element fertilizers and you wish to use more carefully estimated amounts of P and K in your fertilization program.

As with any chemical, proper handling and application of recommended fertilizer amounts will minimize any potential hazard to you or the environment.

Lime Requirement

Most garden plants respond unfavorably when soil pH is too high or too low. You should test your soil pH every two to three years to minimize plant growth problems relating to soil pH. The pH of your soil and a lime requirement test are the only accurate means to determine if your lawn, landscape, or garden will benefit from the addition of lime.

Soil Testing as A Diagnostic Tool

The main purpose behind modern soil testing procedures is to establish lime and fertilizer needs of a crop PRIOR TO PLANTING. Most research efforts have been directed to that goal. When production problems occur, many people feel that a soil test is the best diagnostic tool. However, soil testing is useful in diagnosing crop production and growth problems only under special circumstances. You should:

1) Consult an expert who will help you to interpret your soil test results;
2) Ask the expert about other possible causes. In many cases, additional tests are also needed, such as plant analysis, nematode analysis, etc.;
3) Maintain complete and orderly records of all management practices.

Taking a representative soil sample

Tools

1) A digging implement, such as a soil probe, a spade, or a regular garden hand trowel (Figures 1a and 1b),
2) A plastic bucket,
3) A clean shopping bag or some newspaper,
4) A soil sample bag, one bag for each of your soil samples, and a shipping box in which to send samples to the UF/IFAS Extension Soil Testing Laboratory. These supplies are available free of charge at your county Cooperative Extension Service office. This office is also a good source of many UF/IFAS publications which might add to your skills in lawn care and home gardening.

Sampling

1) Use your digging implement to obtain a small amount of soil from 10 to 15 spots over the area you wish to test. When you sample a lawn, take soil from the upper 2 to 4 inches (Figures 1a and 1b). Sample a vegetable garden or landscape plants by taking soil from the upper 6 to 8 inches.
2) As you take each small sample, place it into the plastic bucket (Fig. 2). Space your sampling sites all over the area. Remember to avoid including soil from any Aproblem@ spots. Submit soil samples from problem spots as separate samples.
3) After sampling, mix the soil in the bucket with your hand so that all the soil is well blended.
4) Take about one pint of the blended soil and place it on the shopping bag or newspaper to air dry. Return any soil remaining in the bucket to the lawn or vegetable garden.
5) While the soil is drying, fill out the requested information in the soil test package, both on the form and on the sample bag. A list of the various lawn types and landscape plants for which recommendations are available can be found in Table 1.
6) When the soil is dry, transfer about one-half pint of soil into the labeled sample bag from the soil test package.
7) Include in the shipping box:

   $ Your labeled soil sample(s);
   $ This Landscape & Vegetable Garden Soil Test Information form (SL-136);
   $ A check or money order payable to: **University of Florida** Checks written in any other name(s) will NOT be honored and returned and will cause avoidable delay in processing the samples.

   Mail your sample to:

   IFAS Analytical Services Laboratories
   Extension Soil Testing Laboratory
   PO Box 110740
   Wallace Bldg. 631
   Gainesville, FL 32611-0740

Test results

A soil test report, including notes to help you use these results to best advantage, will be emailed / mailed to you within 5 to 10 days after your sample arrives at the Extension Soil Testing Laboratory. Contact your county Extension office if you have questions concerning the Soil Test Report.

Table 1. List of lawn types and landscape plants for which recommendations are available. Please record the applicable code numbers on page 1 of this form under ACrop Code(s).@

Crop Code	Lawns
72	bahiagrass
73	bermudagrass
74	carpetgrass
75	centipedegrass
76	ryegrass
77	St. Augustinegrass
78	Zoysiagrass

Crop Code	Landscape Plants and Vegetable Gardens
603	landscape azaleas, camellias, gardenias, hibiscus or ixora
67	blueberries
62	dooryard citrus
602	woody ornamentals or trees in the landscape
90	vegetable garden

NOTE ANY SPECIAL PROBLEMS FOR EXTENSION AGENT BELOW: