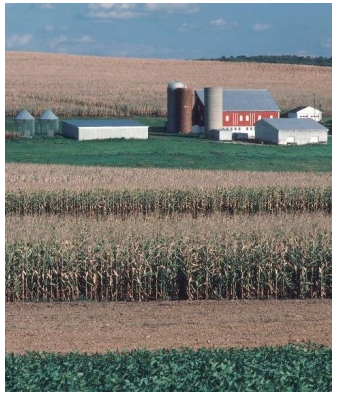
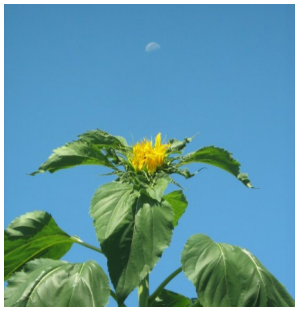
Collecting A Soil Sample

- Soil properties vary from place to place. The sample should be representative of the area to be sampled as a whole. Do not take samples from an unrelated area.
- Remove plant debris or turf from soil surface at sample site.
- Sample lawns, gardens, and fields to a depth of 6-8” .
- Using a clean plastic bucket and a soil probe or spade, combine cores or slices of soil from at least ten locations scattered through out the area to be tested.
- Break up clumps, mix soil thoroughly, and air dry at room temperature.
- Place one pint of sample soil in bag





Test Your Soils And Take The Right First Steps Towards:

- A More Beautiful Lawn
- A More Productive Garden and Farm Fields
- A More Environmentally Friendly Home and Farm

TOMORROW
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Soil Testing

... taking the right first step towards the proper care of your lawn, garden, or farm fields.

...and the best step to the conservation of our watersheds.

Soil Testing…

the right first step

Why Soil Testing?

We all can appreciate rich green lawns, and productive gardens, and farm fields. These spaces add both a 'curbside appeal' and a genuine value to our homes and farms.

To create these beautiful and productive areas we need to consider that all plants, including lawn grasses, garden plants and field crops need 16 essential nutrients to grow and most of them come from the soil. If plants do not receive the needed nutrients, they may never reach their maximum quality and productivity. Plants also require proper soil chemistry as indicated by soil pH.

To maintain the productivity or quality of lawns, gardens, and fields we may need to add fertilizer on a timely basis to supply nutrients or add lime to neutralize acidity and adjust the pH. However, too much fertilizer or applied at the wrong time, may add more nutrients than a lawn, garden, or field needs. Besides the added cost, this may harm the plants or create nutrient run-off that can cause a threat of contamination in our environment. A SOIL TEST can identify the nutrient and pH needs.

The true value of a SOIL TEST is to help ensure that only the needed nutrients are added, in the right quantities, at the right time, and that they will not affect environmental quality.

Benefits of Soil Testing

- **Take advantage of nutrients already in the soil.**
- **Identify nutrients that are lacking in the soil.**
- **Reduce fertilizer usage by applying only when needed.**
- **Provide a proper balance of plant nutrients.**
- **Adjust soil pH to an optimum level.**
- **Reduce the chances of excess nutrients getting into our water sources.**

What is a Soil Test?

A SOIL TEST is a chemical analysis that estimates a soil's ability to supply nutrients. Results from a SOIL TEST allow you to monitor soil chemical conditions, tap into existing nutrient supplies, identify nutrient deficiencies, and apply optimum fertilizer amounts.

Based on results from your soil sample, your county Extension educator can provide you with the following information:

- Which fertilizer analysis is best for your lawn, garden or field. An analysis is the % of nitrogen (N), phosphate (P), and potash (K) which is stated on each fertilizer bag. For example: 25-3-3 contains 25% N, 3% P and 3% K.
- How much of each nutrient should be applied for each application.
- When, during the year, each application should be made.
- Whether your soil pH is in proper range, if not, how much lime is needed to adjust it to the desired range.

When Should Soil Be Tested?

The best time to evaluate the nutrient status of the soil is during a time when plants aren't growing. Although any time of the year is satisfactory. It is more environmentally friendly to TEST the SOIL than to guess about your fertilizer and pH needs. For your SOIL TEST to be accurate as possible, collect the soil sample before any fertilizer is applied and use the proper sampling procedures.

Where can I Get More Information On Soil Testing?

Contact the Athens County Extension Office or the Athens Soil and Water Conservation District Office for more information on SOIL TESTING. They will be able to direct you on soil sampling, submitting your samples for testing, and interpreting the test results.