

How to Collect and Submit a SOIL Sample

Oregon State University- Soil Health Lab

Recommendation: Review [A Guide for Collecting Soil Samples for Farms and Gardens](#) (EC 628) AND Seek advisement from your [local OSU county extension professional](#).

1. **Identify your reason for sampling and determine the areas you will sample.**
 - a. Develop a sampling plan using resources such as [UC Davis SoilWeb](#) or [NRCS Web Soil Survey](#), aerial maps, and your own knowledge of the area's history and landscape.
 - b. Consider how crop type and management differs across your garden or farm.
2. **Determine timing and depth of collection.**
 - a. Sample before you fertilize or when a crop is at its greatest period of growth.
 - b. Depth of sampling depends on the rooting depth of your crop (most commonly 6-8").
3. **Collect the samples.**
 - a. Gather your tools (soil probe OR shovel, clean buckets).
 - b. Scrape away any organic matter or crop residues on the surface prior to sampling.
 - c. Collect 15-30 subsamples from each sampling zone you've identified. Use a random OR grid-pattern for collecting the subsamples.
 - d. Combine subsamples in your clean bucket to create one composite sample representative of the sampling zone. Remove any crop residues and large pieces of organic matter!
4. **Prepare sample for transport to the lab.**
 - a. Place 2-4 cups of your sample into a **plastic** bag for analysis (Ziplock-style bag works best).
 - b. Label the bag with your name, date, field ID, and/or depth of sampling.
 - c. **If you need a nitrogen or microbial analysis, refrigerate your sample immediately after collection.** Otherwise, samples can be left to air-dry until transport to the lab.
5. **Fill out a [Soil Submission Form](#).**
6. **Ship samples AND submission form to the address below.** If you'd like to drop-off samples to the lab, contact us via email first. For samples that must be kept cool, ship with insulating material or an icepack.

OSU Soil Health Lab
3017 Ag Life Sciences Bldg
Corvallis, OR 97331

7. **Contact the lab via email if you'd like to be notified when samples arrive.**

Email: Soil.lab@oregonstate.edu

NOTE:

- **Be consistent with your sampling plan from year to year. This will greatly affect the usefulness of the data you receive and your impact on long-term soil management.**
- **Do NOT** mail or drop off a check with your samples. When the report is complete, you will receive an invoice and the completed report **via email** with information about how to pay.

- You **MUST** report the county and state from which samples are collected. **If samples are from out- of-state, you MUST contact the lab BEFORE shipping.** We are an APHIS permit holder for domestic and international samples.