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TAKING A SOIL SAMPLE FOR A pH TEST- A GOOD SAMPLE MEANS MORE ACCURATE RESULTS

A pH test will give you an idea of the relative acidity or alkalinity level of a soil sample. It will indicate how much, if any, limestone or acidifying agent just be added to the soil to achieve the proper acidity or alkalinity levels for the best growth of plants. Many plants have a definite pH range within which they grow best (i.e. acid soil loving plants, plants preferring more neutral soils, etc). Fertilizer applied to the soil will also be more efficiently used by plants when pH levels are optimum.

It must be remembered that a pH test will not solve insect, disease, or most cultural problems. If you have a plant problem that you feel is associated with soil pH, bring this to the attention of the person testing the soil. Since limestone moves very slowly through the soil, it is best to have a pH test done before planting. In this way, if limestone is required, it may be worked into the top 6-8" of soil before planting.

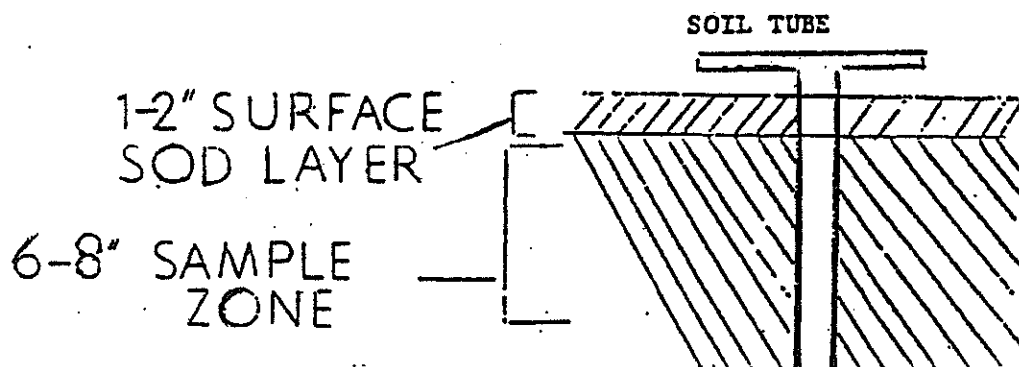
TAKING THE SAMPLE- A soil test is of no real value to you unless the sample of soil to be tested is a good representative one of the conditions as they exist in the soil. This means that several random samples (the number depending upon the size of the area to be tested) should be taken and mixed together to give an "average" or composite sample.

A pint of the mixed sample is necessary for a test. If you have several seemingly quite different areas to be tested, it is better to make up a composite sample from each of the areas (e.g. front and back lawn areas). Label the samples in such a way that you will be able to identify them when you receive your soil test report. Also include the names or types of plants growing or to be grown in this area.

Soil samples can be taken with a trowel, spade, shovel, or with a soil tube. A soil tube can be purchased or may be constructed from a piece of thin-walled conduit or brass tubing.

In sampling the soil of a lawn area, the sample should be taken from beneath the surface sod layer. The samples should come from the top 6-8" of soil (see diagram below). Where a bare soil area is to be sampled, the top 1/4" of soil should be scraped away before taking the sample from the next 6-8" depth of soil.

THE ESSENTIALS- a) Take several samples b) Mix together c) 1 pint needed for test



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