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## **TAKING A SOIL SAMPLE...THE CORRECT WAY**

**“Liming and fertilizing without a soil test is like building a home without a blueprint.”**

**Fertilizer and lime are most effective when used in proper amounts. Soil tests provide a scientific basis for correct usage. If you fail to follow the recommendations, you cannot expect to get top yields and returns.**

**For most situations (lawns, vegetable garden, ornamentals, etc.) the soil should be sampled every 2 to 3 years. For situations involving high-value cash crops or soils under intensive use, it is recommended that the soil be tested prior to planting the crop.**

**Soil samples may be taken at any time during the year, however, avoid extremely wet soil conditions unless absolutely necessary. It is recommended that successive samples from a given situation be taken at about the same time of the year.**

- 1. Using a garden spade or shovel (if available a soil probe or auger works best) slice into the soil to a depth of six inches.**
- 2. Take a one-inch thick slice of soil from the side of the hole. Repeat this process to obtain 5-10 samples, randomly taken, depending on the size of your lawn or garden.**
- 3. Combine all samples into a clean container and mix thoroughly, removing any plant debris or stones. ONE CUP OF SOIL IS ALL THAT IS NEEDED FOR TESTING.**
- 4. If your soil is wet, you will need to let it dry. Let it dry naturally. DO NOT dry in a conventional or microwave oven.**
- 5. Label samples for proper identification (i.e. back yard, vegetable garden). Include your name, address, daytime phone and email.**

**Samples can be brought to the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Canajoharie for testing. The cost is \$2.00 per sample for pH testing.**

*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*