Best Time to Take Soil Samples

Anytime is better than not taking a sample. Fall or the beginning of the dormant season is best because it allows time to secure the nutrients and amendments your soil needs. If you apply the fertilizer and amendments in the fall it gives the minerals more time to digest in the soil before the growing season. The next best option is just after the spring thaw. Spring sampling still gives you time to get the soil to the lab and get the proper inputs needed for your soil before planting. Consistent soil testing followed by appropriate fertilizer and amendment applications always provides a return on your soil sampling investment.

Why Take Soil Samples

A soil sample is the best representation of the average soil conditions your plants/crops are going to encounter during a growing season. Soil samples are key in determining the quality of your harvest. When sampling avoid problem areas in your garden or field unless you specifically want to test those areas and fertilize or amend them separately. **Additional tests will need to be purchased if problem areas are tested.** Regardless of the size of your sampling area, try to get 10-15 probes or cores that represent the entire garden or field as your sample to submit for analysis. If the area being sampled is very mixed with both sand and clay sections etc., sample all areas to gain an average of the field for best results.

How to Take Soil Samples

Tools

1. Use a clean shovel, trowel, knife, spoon, or soil sampling probe, stainless steel or plastic is preferred. Avoid rusty tools as rust may affect the soil test results.

Collect

2. Take 10-15 cores from a soil probe or 1-inch slices from a shovel face from ground level down to a depth of 6 inches for most crops. Place collected samples in a clean plastic pail. Combine samples thoroughly with a hand trowel. If testing for trees or other deep-rooted crops, sample should be taken at a depth of 8-10 inches.

Bag

3. Using a measuring cup scoop 1 1/2 cups of combined soil into the provided zip-lock bag. Make sure all air is removed from bag and closed securely for transportation.

Send

4. Place the soil collection bag and the completed Rocky Mountain BioAg® soil test order form for gardens or field data sheet for farms into the provided USPS box with pre-paid shipping label and secure the closure. Place in a USPS receptacle for delivery to the testing labs.

Test

5. We will email your test results when they are complete. If you need test interpretation purchase the Rocky Mountain BioAg® Soil Test Interpretation with recommendations from our website. If you have purchased the interpretation your recommendations will be emailed with your test.