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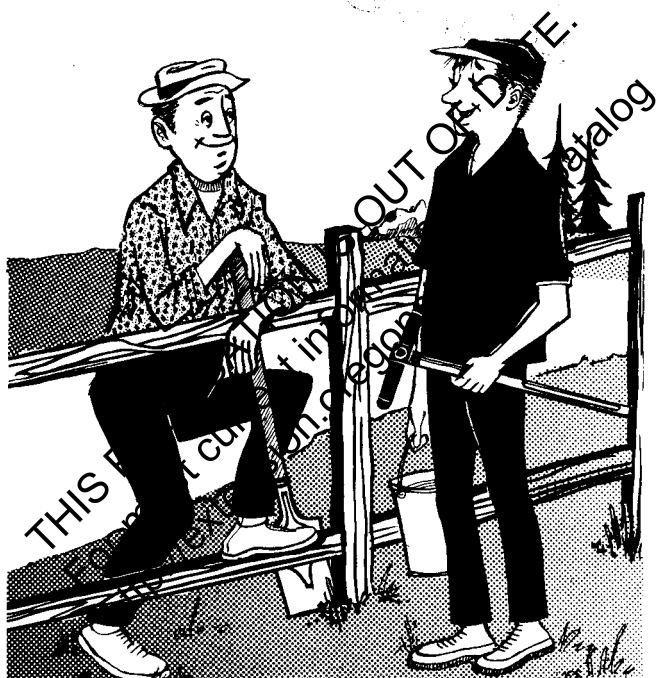
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Soil Sample

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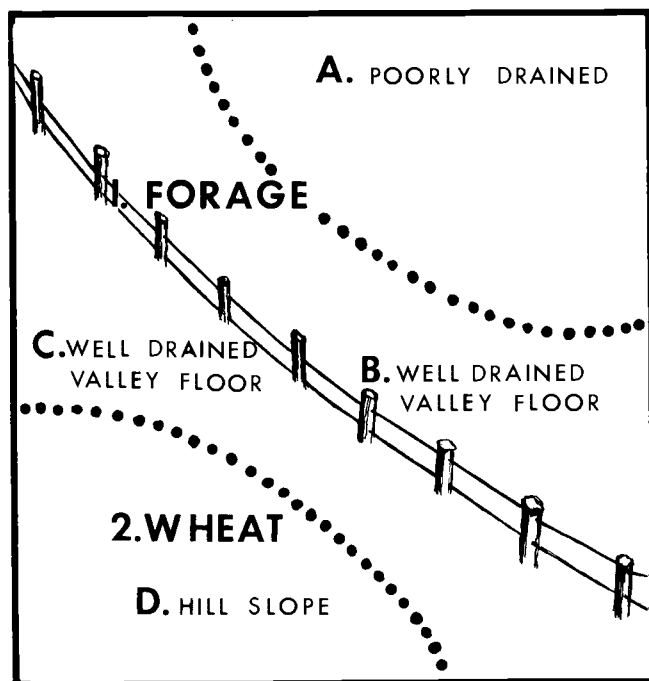


COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
Corvallis

AN OSU Soil Test will help you to develop and maintain a more productive soil and to increase net returns per acre by providing information on the available nutrient content and fertility status of the soil. This helps you to select the correct kind and amount of fertilizer and liming material.

A soil sample weighing approximately ½ pound is used to represent from 2 to 40 million pounds of soil in the field. Thus care in soil sampling is essential.

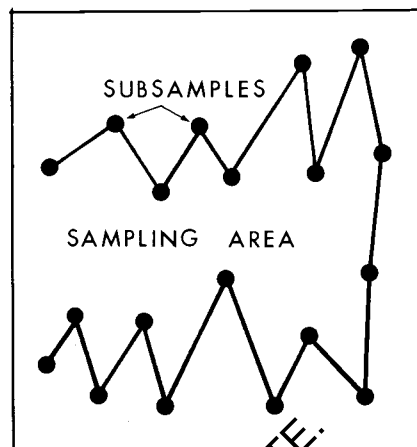
Each Soil Sample Should Represent Only One Soil Type or Soil Condition



Different soil types should be sampled separately. Thus A, B, C, and D should be sampled separately. Areas such as 1 and 2, with different management histories, should be sampled separately. In this example a separate soil sample should be taken from each of the four following sampling areas: 1A. Forage on poorly drained soil. 1B. Forage on well drained valley floor soil. 2C. Wheat on well drained valley floor soil. 2D. Wheat on hill slope soil.

A Good Soil Sample Should Represent the Area

- Each sample should consist of subsamples taken from 15 to 20 locations within the sampling area.



Small Unusual Areas Should Be Avoided

- Take separate soil samples from unusual areas which are large enough to fertilize separately.



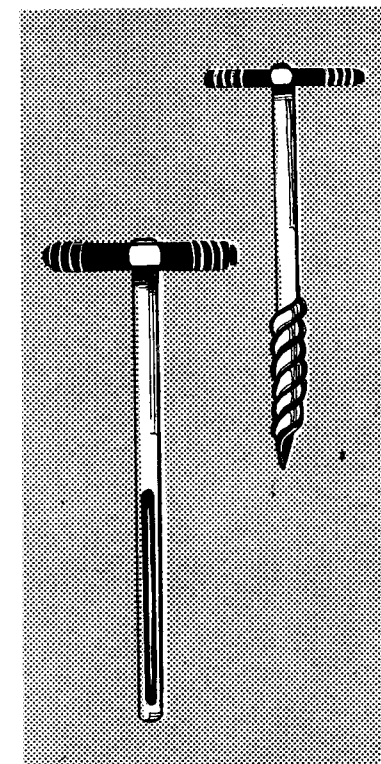
Where fertilizer has previously been banded, as for vegetable crops, take at least 30 to 40 subsamples. Do not take subsamples from fertilizer bands where rows can be identified.

Take Soil Sample to the Correct Depth

- Unless otherwise specified, soil samples are taken to plow depth—usually from the surface down to about 6 to 9 inches.
- When deeper soil samples are required, they are removed from the bottom of the holes from which the surface sample was taken.



Avoid Contaminating the Sample



- Use clean sampling tools.
- Avoid contaminating the sample during mixing or packaging.
- A small amount of fertilizer residue on tools or hands, for instance, can cause serious contamination of the soil sample.
- Galvanized, brass, or bronze sampling tools should not be used for soil samples where a soil test for micro nutrients is to be run.

The Soil Sample Should be Carefully Mixed and Packaged

- Soil sub-samples should be placed in a clean container and mixed thoroughly.
- The soil sample bag is filled with the soil mixture.



Special Soil Sampling Techniques Are Sometimes Required for:

- Some crops such as established orchards.
- Some nutrients such as nitrate nitrogen. Nitrate nitrogen soil tests are recommended only for a limited number of crops in eastern Oregon.
- Special soil sampling techniques are described in other publications or instructions.

Forwarding the Soil Sample



Print the necessary information on the sample bag. Be sure to number each sample and keep a record on the fields sampled.

- Don't use paper bag for soil sample.
- Fill out information sheet and mail it at the same time the sample is mailed.

- Include a check to cover the cost of the soil test with the information sheet.

- Wrap sample securely and mail to:

SOIL TESTING LABORATORY
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
CORVALLIS, OREGON 97331

Soil sample bags, sampling instructions, and soil sample information sheets are available from your Extension agent.

- Soil test results are sent to your County Extension Agent who makes the fertilizer and liming recommendations. The recommendations are based on the results of fertilizer experiments, soil surveys, and results obtained by farmers.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD SOILS BE TESTED?

For perennial crops such as alfalfa, grass seed, and permanent pasture soils should be tested prior to seeding and subsequently at least every 3 years. The initial soil test, prior to seeding, is particularly important.

For annual crops the soil should be tested annually before planting.

- Soil testing well in advance of planting is important particularly in the case of acid soils where liming is likely to be needed. Lime should be applied and mixed with the soil several months prior to seeding as lime reacts slowly with the soil.



This revision of Extension Circular 628, written by T. L. Jackson, professor of soils, and A. S. King, Extension conservation specialist, was prepared by E. Hugh Gardner, Extension soils specialist, Oregon State University, Corvallis.

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