

Massachusetts Master Gardener Association

FACT SHEET

Have gardening questions? Contact the **Master Gardener Help Line.**

At *Mass Hort, Wellesley*: mghelpline@masshort.org, 617-933-4929

At *Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston*: hortline@towerhillbg.org, 608-869-6111 x104

Please visit our website for Help Line hours <http://massmastergardeners.org/what-i-do/>



How to Take a Soil Sample for pH Testing

Taking a soil sample for pH testing is easy:

- (1) **Identify the area(s) of your property you want to test:** Different areas may require different pH levels, e.g., lawn vs. flower bed vs. vegetable garden. To submit different areas for testing, collect separate samples. Within a given area, if there are sections that are sickly vs. healthy, they should also be sampled and labeled separately (e.g., sickly vs. healthy sections of lawn).
- (2) **Gather your supplies:**
 - A clean spade, shovel, soil probe, or augur for digging your sample(s)
 - One small clean bucket for each area you plan to sample (e.g., one bucket for the lawn, a separate bucket for your flower bed)
 - One small plastic bag for each area to be sampled
- (3) **Dig your soil sample(s):**
 - **Step A:** Depending on how large the area is, dig 5-10 holes approx. 6-8" deep for gardens (4-6" deep for lawns; 8-10" deep for trees/ shrubs); remove a sample of the soil all the way down to the depth of the hole; in other words, collect soil from the top, the middle and the bottom of the hole.
 - **Step B:** Combine all soil samples from the same area in a clean bucket. Mix thoroughly and remove stones, sticks or other debris.
 - **Step C:** Let the soil dry out for a few days in the bucket.
 - **Step D:** Put approx. 1/2 cup of dry soil into a plastic bag. Mark the bag with your name and the area of your property where the sample was taken (e.g., lawn, rhododendron bed).
 - If you want to sample additional areas of your property, repeat Steps A-B-C-D above.
- (4) **Bring your sample(s) to the Master Gardener Soil pH Test table at one of our free events.** (See website for schedule.)

The Massachusetts Master Gardener Association is a non-profit organization whose mission is to share knowledge and experience with the public through outreach programs in education, horticulture and gardening; to provide the Master Gardener Training Program to interested members of the public; and to provide graduates of the Master Gardener Training Program with educational and practical opportunities to extend their knowledge and interests in gardening and related topics.

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