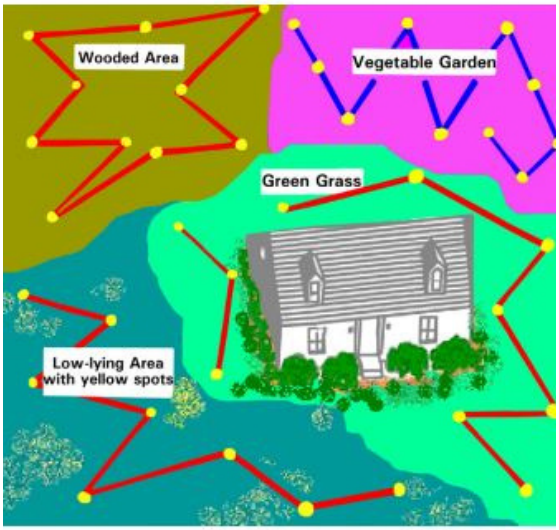
Forsyth County

SOIL TESTING

For Home, Lawns, Gardens and Wildlife Food Plots

Developing and maintaining productive soils begin with soil testing. Soil tests provide information on the soil's actual nutrient status. Test results are used to determine the amount and kind of nutrients that should be added for the best growth of lawn, garden, and other types of plants.

UGA Extension Forsyth County / 4-H
5110 Piney Grove Road | Cumming, GA 30040
770-887-2418
Basic Soil sample cost: $13 (Cash, Check or Card)
Office is open Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm.



Sampling Locations

Map out the area where the plants are to be grown or are presently growing. This will help in record keeping and ensure that the soil is taken from throughout the entire area. Divide the area such that each soil sample represents one plant type or condition. An area that has been divided according to obvious differences in plant types, plant performance, soil types, and drainage is shown in Figure 1.

- Use a zigzag approach when taking samples. Collect 8-10 soil samples from each location (zone) as shown in Figure 1.
- For trees and shrubs, take soil samples from six to eight spots around the dripline of the plants.

Sampling Depth

The depth of sampling depends on the type of plants being grown.

- For lawns, sample to a depth of 4 inches.

For gardens, ornamentals, mixed fruit trees, and wildlife plots, sample to a depth of 6 inches.

Sampling Time

Soil sampling should be done well in advance of planting or spring green-up. This allows adequate time for sample analysis, data interpretation, and fertilizer and lime application.

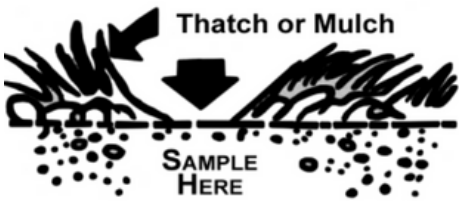


Figure 2: Remove grass thatch or mulch before sampling.

Figure 3: Soil sampling with a trowel.

Sampling Tools

Use clean sampling tools and containers to avoid contaminating the soil sample. Never use tools or containers that have been used for fertilizer or lime. Collect samples with tools like trowels, shovels, spades, hand probes or hand augers.

Sampling Procedures

Clear the ground surface of grass thatch or mulch (Figure 2). Using a trowel, push the tool to the desired depth into the soil. Push the handle forward, with the spade still in the soil to make a wide opening. Then, as shown in Figure 3, cut a thin slice from the side of the opening that is of uniform thickness, approximately 1/4-inch thick and 2 inches in width, extending from the top of the ground to the depth of the cut. Collect from several locations. Combine and mix them in a plastic bucket to avoid metal contamination. Take about a pint of the mixed soil and place it the UGA soil sample bag. Be sure to identify the sample clearly on the bag and the submission form before mailing.

Deliver Your Soil

Samples should be air dried overnight. Dry samples on a flat surface lined with clean white paper. Take care to avoid contamination. After drying, transfer the sample to zipper lock bag or container and taken to our office: 5110 Piney Grove Road | Cumming, GA 30040.

For more information: Visit our Website : https://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html