

**FOR RELEASE WEEK OF JANUARY 27, 2016**

**TITLE: TEST YOUR GARDEN SOIL**

**BY: RICKY ENSLEY, COUNTY EXTENSION COORDINATOR**

**POLK COUNTY EXTENSION, 20 N. MAIN STREET, CEDARTOWN**

**770-749-2142**

**uge2233@uga.edu**

A beautiful vegetable garden can be a rewarding experience to the gardener. Successful gardening is not easily accomplished.

There are a number of management practices that should be used to the best success in a vegetable garden. Of these practices, nothing is more important than soil testing.

Soil testing uses a chemical method for estimating the fertility and pH of a plot of a soil. These attributes, so important to plant growth and productivity, cannot be determined by feeling, smelling, or closely looking at the soil. We rely on soil testing to reveal residual fertility levels and the pH of our garden soils.

Top plant growth cannot occur without adequate uptake of nutrients. The primary storehouse of this “plant food” is the soil. Most soils contain varying, although insufficient amounts of the essential fertilizer elements. Gardeners must compensate for any deficiencies in soil by fertilizer applications. Soil testing is a valuable tool that allows us to compensate or avoid the application of too much of certain elements.

Detailed instructions for submitting soil samples are available from Polk County Extension office. Do not neglect this important step of successful gardening.

The cost of routine soil samples is \$9.00 per bag.