

SURFACE SOIL SAMPLING PROCEDURE

1.0 Scope and Application

This standard operating procedure is applied to collect representative soil samples for chemical analysis including nutrient and environmental contaminants in home or community gardens.

2.0 Method Summary

Soil is very heterogeneous and collecting a representative sample is crucial to obtain better results. Composite sample of 5 to 6 sub-soil samples are sufficient for small gardens. Following collection, the soil can be homogenized in a container constructed of inert material such as plastic buckets. Then appropriate size of homogenized sample is transferred to the appropriate sample containers, such as Ziplocs or soil bags.

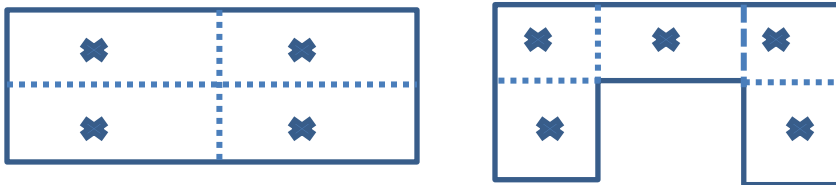
3.0 Equipment and Materials

Equipment needed for collection of soil samples may include some of the following:

1. Stainless steel, plastic, or other appropriate composition bucket
2. Sample bags, Ziploc plastic bags
3. Stainless steel hand trowel

4.0 Sample Collection Procedure

1. Determine the area of your plot to be sampled. If your plot is rectangular, divide it into five to six parts as follows:



2. Using hand trowel (plastic or stainless steel, no chrome coated), dig a hole in the ground to the desired sampling depth (0 – 6 inches) using a spade or a shovel, leaving on edge of the hole straight.

3. Use the trowel to cut a discrete **one inch** sample strip through the straight edge of the hole making sure that a uniform amount of soil is taken from the soil surface to the bottom of the sampling depth.
4. Sample at five or more different locations of the area to be tested. Only sample the fine soil, do not include grass, rocks, etc.
5. Transfer all soil sample into a container (clean/new plastic or stainless steel bucket), and homogenize the sample by mixing it in the bucket with a stainless-steel or plastic trowel.
6. Transfer about one lb of the composite sample into a clean plastic bag (Ziploc bag)
7. Write your name, plot number and street address of your garden on the sample bag with a permanent marker.
8. Complete SITE INFORMATION (see next page)
9. Drop the sample at the main campus of UDC, 4200 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington DC 20008. Building 42, Room 110.



Note: *Do not use metals tools unless it is stainless. Ziploc plastic must be new.*

Do not take sample if the soil is wet due to rain or watering in the previous day.

We accept one composite sample per garden.

Check List:

- Complete application form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1UZYQlGRudCKimS-OvmnP-lrXD-kpKra9-ayAbIkTdV4/viewform>
- Complete site information
- Sample collected based on the guideline in a clean Ziploc plastic
- Write on the sample bag with permanent marker: name, sample location, e.g. front yard, back yard etc.

SITE INFORMATION

Please kindly complete this site information form to help us interpret the result of your soil test.

1. Name and street address of the garden plot:

2. Identification name or plot number:

3. Soil type of the plot if known:

4. Type of soil amendment used on the plot (mineral fertilizer, cow manure, horse manure or compost, etc)

5. When was the last time your soil was tested? Were there any particular results of interest?

6. Any other details about the garden you would like us to know:

7. Problem of the garden, if any: