

“How do I get my soil tested?”

The **Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory** is a service unit of Rutgers/New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. Located on Rutgers' G.H. Cook campus, the Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory performs horticultural/agronomic analyses of soils for farmers, residents, businesses, golf courses, researchers, etc.

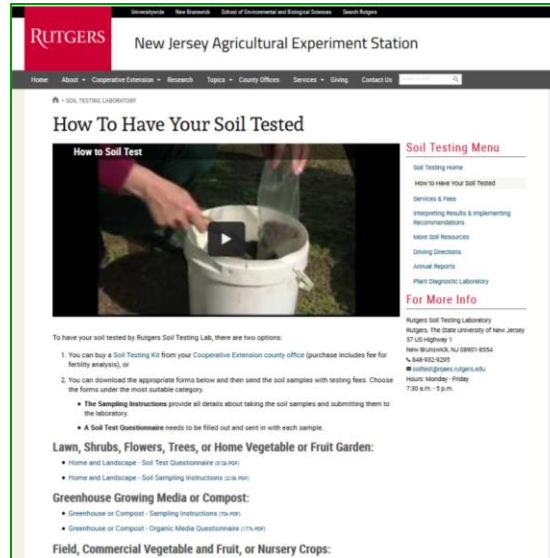
There are two options for initiating the soil testing process.

- 1) **Soil testing kits** may be purchased from your County Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) office. The purchase price of a soil testing kit includes the cost of the standard fertility test. Each kit includes an information sheet, a questionnaire, and a mailing bag or envelope. The information sheet provided with the soil testing kit describes proper sampling procedures. Please read and follow the directions carefully.

or

2) Download “Soil Sampling Instructions” and a “Soil Test Questionnaire” from the Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory website:

njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-testing-lab/how-to.php



Please read the sampling instructions carefully before taking your soil sample(s).

Target turnaround time for the standard soil fertility test is 5 working days from the day that the STL receives your sample. Please allow more time during busy seasons (spring, fall). A soil test report will be e/mailed to the address given on your soil test questionnaire.

Additional tests will require more time.

Find the location and contact information for your county office of Rutgers Cooperative Extension at:

njaes.rutgers.edu/county/



“What will I learn from the soil test?”

The standard soil test determines the fertility level and pH of the sample.

The plant nutrients phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, boron, copper, manganese, iron, and zinc are quantified to determine their availability to the intended crop. The level of soil acidity or alkalinity is measured by pH. The soil test report will then provide recommendations for fertilizer requirements and pH adjustment based on soil nutrient levels, pH, intended crop or ornamental planting, and site conditions.

Fertilizer recommendations include nitrogen requirements of your crop.

Nitrogen content is **not** part of the standard soil test. Inorganic forms of nitrogen, which are available to plants, are short-lived in soil, with values changing constantly, and sometimes rapidly, throughout the growing season. Because of this, nitrogen recommendations are more reliably based on seasonal requirements of the crop. Soil test reports **do** include recommendations for fertilizer nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium ($N-P_2O_5-K_2O$) requirements.

If plant-available nitrogen levels in soil are of special interest, the inorganic nitrogen test can be requested at additional cost for a “snapshot” of nitrate-N and ammonium-N levels in the soil at the time sampled.

"Why should I test my soil?"

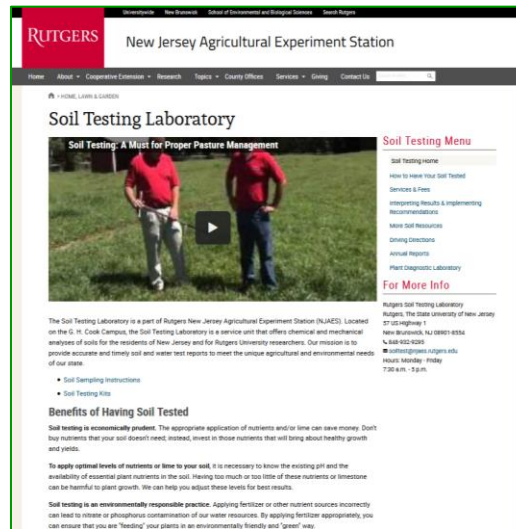
- **To apply optimum levels of nutrients or lime to your soil**, it is necessary to know the existing pH and the availability of essential plant nutrients in the soil. Remember: Excess nutrients or limestone can be as detrimental to plant growth as deficiencies of nutrients soil acidity.
- The appropriate application of nutrients and/or lime is not only agronomically desirable but is also **economically prudent**. Don't buy nutrients that your soil doesn't need; only invest in those nutrients that will bring about a growth/yield response.
- **Soil testing is an environmentally responsible** practice. The improper application of fertilizer or other nutrient sources can lead to nitrate or phosphorus contamination of our water resources. By applying the most appropriate kind and amount of fertilizer at the proper time, you can ensure that you are just "feeding" your plant-life and not polluting our environment.



Soil Science Society of America-NAPT

For more information, visit the Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory website:

njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-testing-lab



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Check out the soil testing Facebook page!

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Don't guess...-

Soil Test!

