

Soil Sampling Instructions for Tree Fruits & Grapes:

Soil testing is an excellent tool for optimizing the nutrition status of the soil before planting perennial crops such as tree fruits and grapes. This is particularly important for those nutrients, such as P, K and lime that move very slowly in the soil where surface applications after planting provide little benefit and incorporation would destroy much of the root system. Soil tests can be only as accurate as the samples from which they are taken. Therefore, proper collection of soil samples is extremely important. Special bags for submitting soil samples can be obtained from your county extension education director.

- 1) Obtain at least one separate composite sample for each two-acre area, or less if conditions vary.
- 2) Obtain a separate composite sample for each different soil type. Differences in soil type can be noted by texture, color, drainage and slope. Check your county Soil Survey to determine what different soil types exist on your property.
- 3) For each composite sample use a soil probe, soil auger, spade, or garden trowel, and obtain a sample or core of soil from at least 10 to 15 different places in the sampling area. For tree fruits and grapes, collect serial samples from the 0 to 6 inch depth and from the 6 to 12 inch depth. Place cores from each depth in separate, clean plastic buckets, and thoroughly mix each sample. Take about a half-pint of the mix for testing.
- 4) Label each sample with your name, a number, and depth from which it was collected. Keep a record of these numbers.
- 5) Samples should be sent to the Soil Testing Laboratory in a field moist condition. Do not dry the samples before mailing.
- 6) Mail the samples to the Lab as soon as possible. If you cannot mail them within one day of sampling, store them in the refrigerator until they can be mailed.
- 7) Be sure to keep a record for yourself of the area from which the samples were taken. The information sheet that you submit with your samples will not be returned to you. For Orchards and Vineyards, especially commercial ventures, results will be sent to Dr. Paul Domoto for interpretation.
- 8) The test series recommended for tree fruits and grapes is number 6: Regular series (pH, lime, P, K) + OM + Zinc + Mg.