

Soil sampling guide

(Applicable for both Nutrient and Biological assessments)

An effective soil program can only be developed when all elements of soil content, air, water, nutrients and micro-biological life are taken into account.

When sampling soil however, care should be taken to avoid variations in soil types and soil conditions as these can affect results. The following Soil Sampling Method is designed to provide a reliable guide to the condition of your soil and ensure the sample truly reflects the soil of the sampling site.



- If the soil type varies within the area to be tested, sample the predominant soil type only.
- A minimum of 10 to 15 cores per site is recommended, taken in a pattern across the site. The more samples taken, the more representative and accurate the results will be.
- Core depths of 150 mm are suitable for most applications, using a 20mm – 25mm core diameter.
- If a sample needs to be held overnight, place in the fridge.

Deeper or subsurface soil sampling is beneficial where salinity and acidity are suspected. Take at least 10 to 15 sample cores from the 150 to 300 mm interval of the soil profile. Avoid contaminated and deceptive areas such as in the vicinity of gateways, animal tracks, fences, trees, fertiliser or lime loading areas, extremely wet soils should not be sampled. Areas with major soil type variations, or that differ in appearance, crop growth or past treatment, should be sampled separately, provided the area can be treated separately.

- Sampling equipment and tools – such as an auger, sampling tube or spade may be used in taking samples. Important:
- Use a clean plastic bucket to collect and mix samples or place cores straight into a sealable plastic (lunch bag), a metal bucket may contaminate the sample for trace element analysis.
- If a sampling tool is not available, use a spade to dig small holes with a vertical side and take a uniform slice of soil about 20 mm wide to the required depth.
- Label each sample bag with the relevant sample and site details and then fill sample bag (approximately 200g - 300g or half a sandwich bag), immediately after sample core collection. Ensuring that the sample identification corresponds with that of the sample bag.