

**SOIL & WATER TEST FORM**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe the reason you are having your soil/water tested:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please check one:** **TURF:** \_\_\_ Bahia \_\_\_ St. Augustine \_\_\_ Bermuda \_\_\_ Zoysia  
**FRUIT TREES:** \_\_\_ Citrus \_\_\_ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_ **VEGETABLES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**OTHER (specify):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Soil and water samples are \$5 each, payable by cash or check.**

Make checks payable to: Sarasota Board of County Commissioners

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Total # of samples** \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5.00/sample = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Collected ( \_\_\_ check or \_\_\_ cash)

Received by \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_ Satellite \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample#** \_\_\_\_\_ **S or W** \_\_\_\_\_ **pH** \_\_\_\_\_ **(ds/m)** \_\_\_\_\_ **(ppm) soluble salts**

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## How to Take a Soil Sample

1. Identify the area(s) to be sampled. Turf areas, vegetable gardens, and ornamental beds should all be sampled separately.
2. Using a shovel, trowel, or soil probe, remove soil from several spots in the sampling area. Be sure to take samples of soil, not mulch or plant material. Remove from 2-4 inches below the surface for turfgrass and 6-8 inches below the surface for vegetables and landscape plants.
3. For multiple samples from the same area, select several similar samples at random, place in a container, and mix together. Remove any plant material or mulch. Avoid combining soils that look different (e.g. light vs. dark, sandy vs. clay). Samples should only be combined for testing with other soil samples that appear similar. When in doubt, test samples separately.
4. Remove approximately 1-2 cups (1 pint) of soil and spread it out on newspaper or a similar material to dry. Allow the soil to air dry thoroughly before testing.
5. Remove 1 cup of soil and place it into a clean bag or jar to submit for testing at the Extension Office. For a \$5.00 fee, soil samples can be tested for pH and soluble salts.
6. If you would like nutrients tested in addition to pH and soluble salts, the Extension Office has free bags and pre-addressed boxes for you to use to send your samples to the UF/IFAS Soil Laboratory in Gainesville. There will be an additional charge for this service.

## Why Take a Soil Sample?

Our native sandy soils are predominantly acidic except for the calcareous soils of South Florida. However, where native soils have been disturbed and new development has occurred, alkaline soils are often used as fill or topsoil. Many plant problems result when plants are growing in soils with an actual pH to which they are not adapted. Some plants need acidic soil; others will tolerate a wide range of soil pH. Very few grow well in soils with high pH (alkaline soils). Generally speaking, neutral soils are in the 6.0-7.0 pH range; acidic soils are below 6.0, and alkaline soils are above 7.0. If the soil pH is lower than you desire, lime can be added to raise the pH. If the soil pH is higher than desired, elemental sulfur can be added routinely to temporarily lower the pH, but it is not a permanent solution. The best solution to pH problems is to select plants that are adapted to your soils.

For more information on soil pH, refer to “Soil pH and the Home Landscape or Garden” (EDIS publication #SL256: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss480>)

## Desirable pH ranges for turfgrasses:

pH <5.5	pH 5.5-6.4	pH 6.5-7.4	pH >7.4
Bermudagrass	Bermudagrass	Bermudagrass	Bermudagrass
Carpetgrass	Carpetgrass	St. Augustinegrass	St. Augustinegrass
Centipedegrass	Centipedegrass		Zoysiagrass
Bahiagrass	Bahiagrass		