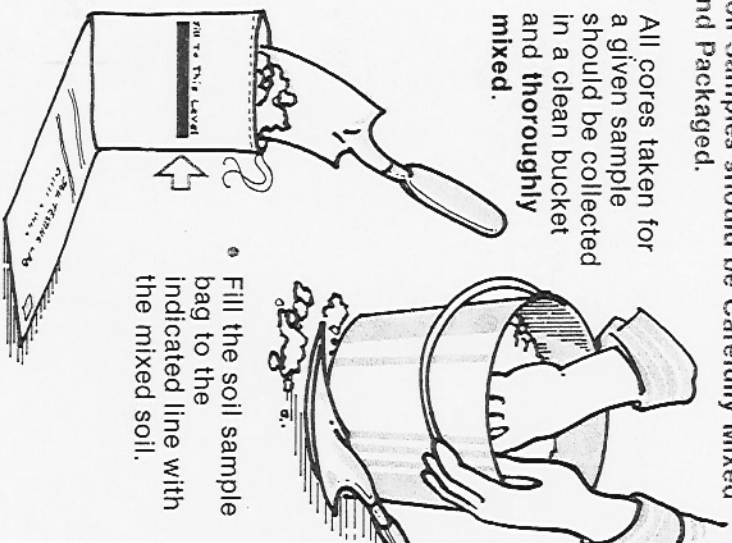


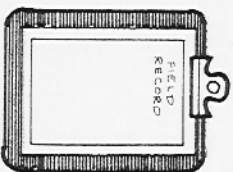
Soil Samples should be Carefully Mixed and Packaged.

- All cores taken for a given sample should be collected in a clean bucket and thoroughly mixed.

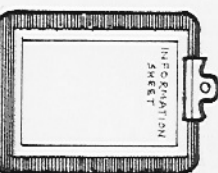


Forwarding the Sample

- Be sure to number each sample and keep a complete record of what field or field area is represented by each sample.



- Fill out the information sheet provided with each sample bag and place in the attached envelope.



- Do not use sample bags other than those provided by the laboratory.

- Samples may be dropped off at your county extension office or mailed directly to:

Soil Testing Laboratory
College of Agricultural Sciences
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19711-1303

- Soil sample bags, sample information sheets, and sampling instructions are available at your county extension office.
- Purchasing a sample bag automatically pays for routine analysis. Please pay for special tests in advance at the county extension office, and include the receipt with your sample.

How Often Should Soils Be Tested?

- For annual crops, testing annually is generally recommended. However, when fertility levels are very high or excessive, sampling every 2 to 3 years is adequate.
- For perennial crops such as alfalfa and permanent pasture, soils should be tested prior to seeding and at least every 3 years thereafter. The initial soil test is especially important if fertilizer materials need to be incorporated into the topsoil.
- Where lime is likely to be needed, be sure to sample well in advance of planting. Because lime reacts fairly slowly, it should be mixed with soil several months before seeding.

Prepared by D. R. Parker, Research Associate,
Soil Testing.

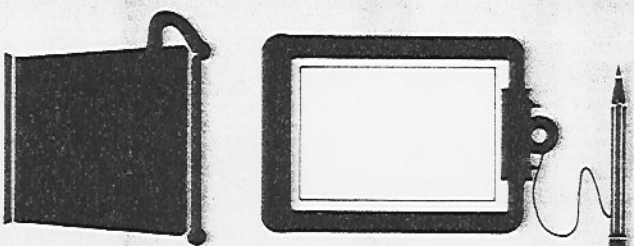
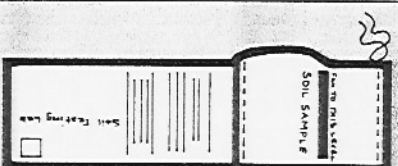
It is the policy of the University of Delaware that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national or ethnic origin, age, handicapped or veteran status.

HOW TO TAKE A SOIL SAMPLE

CIRCULAR #18

SOIL TESTING
LABORATORY

FOR
COMMERCIAL
CROP
PRODUCTION



Plant Science
Department

University
of Delaware

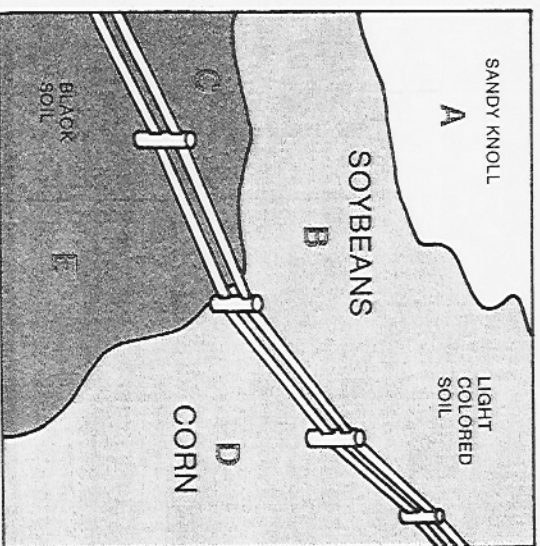
College of
Agricultural
Sciences

Newark, DE
19711-1303

SOIL TESTS such as those conducted by the University of Delaware Soil Testing Laboratory will help you to develop and maintain more productive soil, and to maximize economic yields by providing information about the fertility status of your soil. This helps you select the proper liming and fertilization program.

A soil test can only be as accurate as the sample on which it is made. A soil sample weighing about 1/2 pound is used to represent from 2 to 80 million pounds of soil in the field. Therefore, it is extremely important that soil samples be properly and carefully taken.

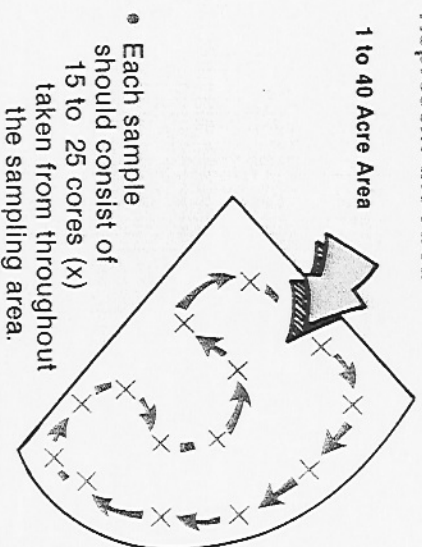
Each Soil Sample Should Represent Only One Soil Type or Soil Condition.



Areas with different soil types or management histories should be sampled separately. In the above example, three samples — A, B, and C — should be taken from the soybean field, one for each soil type. Two additional samples — D and E — should be taken from the two soil types found in the corn field.

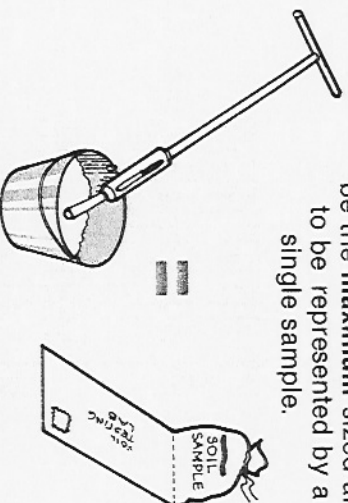
A Good Soil Sample Should Represent the Area

1 to 40 Acre Area



- Each sample should consist of 15 to 25 cores (X) taken from throughout the sampling area.

- In general, 40 acres should be the **maximum** sized area to be represented by a single sample.



15 to 25 CORES EQUAL 1 SAMPLE

Small, Unusual Areas Should Be Avoided.

- Where fertilizer has previously been banded, do not take cores from the fertilizer bands where these can be identified.
- Avoid wet spots, dead furrows, and areas where manure, lime, or fertilizer has been stockpiled or spilled.
- Unusual areas which are large enough to fertilize separately should be sampled separately.

Do Not Contaminate the Sample

- Use clean sampling tools and containers.

- A small amount of fertilizer or limestone residue on tools or hands can cause serious contamination of the sample.

- Steel sampling tools and plastic buckets are best. Do not use galvanized, brass, or bronze tools when testing soils for micronutrients such as copper and zinc.



Take Soil Samples to the Proper Depth.

- In general, soil samples are taken to the plow depth — usually from the surface down to 6 to 9 inches.
- No-till and reduced-tillage fields should also be sampled to 6 to 9 inches for fertilizer recommendations. Surface 2-inch samples are used primarily to assess herbicide activity problems.

