

Foreword to the 2nd Edition:

This Second Edition of the Recommended Soil Testing Procedures for the Northeastern United States is a product of cooperative work by all members of the Northeast Region Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing, NEC-67. The Committee was organized in 1986 with the objectives to improve and standardize soil testing methods, discuss recommendations, educate and provide a forum to advance the science and technology of soil testing.

Soil and plant testing has traditionally been used to determine the need for nutrients in the production of field crops. Today, the uses for soil testing information extend beyond field crop production to lawns and gardens, production of specialty crops, urban planning, and to monitoring the quality of our environment.

Since the formation of NEC-67, new tools have been developed to aid in the testing of soils and in the application of the test results. Laboratory instrumentation has been upgraded in accuracy, automation and new technologies. Most laboratory instruments are interfaced with computers and many processes are computer controlled including the use of robots. Quality assurance and quality control measures, such as sample exchanges and proficiency testing, are standard features of today's laboratories. In the field, use of remote sensing and global positioning satellites, which requires "ground truth" soils data, makes possible precision farming which incorporates site-specific features. Development of instruments for on-the-go sensing and harvest yield monitoring is expanding the use of soil testing technology.

The 1991 Edition of the Regional Soil Testing Publication received wide distribution and is an important reference document for soil testing laboratories in the northeast and other regions of the U.S. The Second Edition contains new chapters on quality assurance, cation exchange capacity, soluble salts and interpretation philosophies used by Northeastern laboratories in developing recommendations. The new Edition should receive even wider distribution due to an increased demand for soil testing information.

The Northeast Region Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing is an excellent example of cooperation for the betterment of the entire Region. This publication produced by the Committee is a good example of a product that can be used across the Region and beyond. As with most publications, a few authors accept the challenge of organizing and editing the manuscript. A special word of thanks and appreciation to Dr. Tom Sims and Dr. Ann Wolf for accepting the challenge.

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