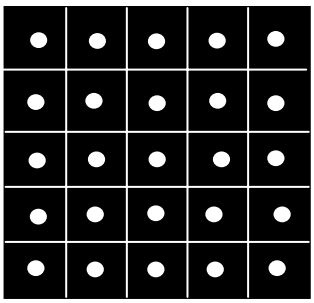
HOW TO TAKE A PROPER SOIL SAMPLE

Lime and fertilizer are essential for good crop production. Soil testing helps you manage those production inputs. We provide a soil pH analysis free of charge at the Duval County Extension office. You may also receive a more in depth analysis for $7.00 plus postage from the University of Florida. When taking a sample follow the simple steps below.

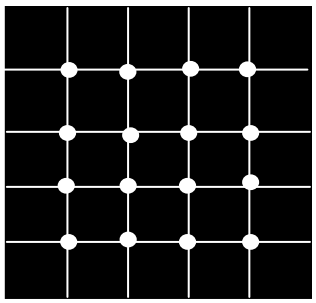
1. Divide farm into areas for sampling. Sample separately areas with different crop growth, soil color, lime or fertilizer histories.
2. Take a core from at least 10-15 spots in each area. The sample you collect should be the average of the field or area sampled.
3. Use a shovel or trowel, dig a V-shaped hole in the soil 6 inches deep, and slice a slab off one side of hole.
4. Mix cores together and place a pint of the combined sample in a bag.
5. Identify samples so you will know which sample came from which field.
6. Fill out and complete soil sample information sheet.
7. See your county agent for interpretation of results and fertilizer recommendations.

Example for Sampling a Field or Plot

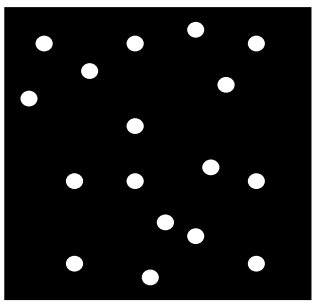
(Each point represents a sub-sample)



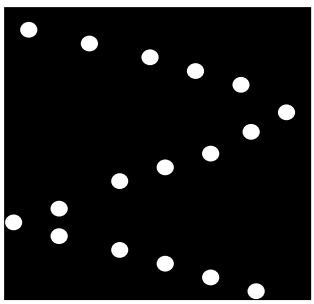
Centered Grid



Intersected Grid



Random



Zig Zag

What a Soil Analysis Does and Does Not Do

DOES	DOES NOT
Determine pH	Tell you which crop to grow
Determines levels of nutrients needed for a specific crop	Will not prevent poor crops caused by acts of nature
Determines how much lime is needed	Substitute for proper cultural practices
Determine which nutrients need to be added to your soil as fertilizer	Take the place of good management
Tell you how much fertilizer is needed for your crop and soil	

Raising pH

1) Soil pH is adjusted upward by adding liming material.
2) Soil pH adjustment with lime takes time!
3) The speed of the reaction depends on particle size of the lime & liming material.
4) Be careful. It is possible to over lime.

Calcitic versus dolomitic limestone

- Calcitic limestone contains primarily calcium carbonate.
- Dolomitic limestone is composed of both calcium and magnesium carbonates.
- UF recommends the use of dolomite lime.
- Hydrated lime is not recommended.

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