

# Soil Sampling Procedures for Pastures and Farms

soil is fertilized and cropped intensively. **Annual sampling is recommended** (1) on areas where high-value cash crops such as tobacco and vegetables are grown, (2) on areas testing high in P and K where no phosphate or potash is recommended and none is applied, and (3) on areas

sample. For peach and apple orchards, a sampling depth of 12 to 14 inches is recommended. For pecans, a depth of 6 to 8 inches is recommended.

### **Gardens**

The recommended sampling depth for gardens is 6 inches. This is the normal spading depth of most garden soils.

### **Lawns and Turf**

Take soil samples to a depth of 4 inches. This is the actual soil depth and should not include roots or other accumulated organic material on the surface. When collecting soil plugs, remove the organic residue that may be present on the surface; this eliminates the contamination of the soil sample with dried plant material, which can influence the analysis. In order to take an inconspicuous sample, use small-diameter soil sampling tools. A sampling device for golf greens and tees can be made from an old golf club shaft.

### **Subsoil Sampling**

Take a subsoil sample every four to five years. This is especially important in problem areas. A subsoil sample should be to a depth six inches below plow depth or normal surface sampling depth.

## **How to Submit Samples for Testing**

A soil test is always a good starting point before investing in fertilizer or lime. For \$9, our office can test your soil and provide an exact pH and nutrient analysis with recommendations on exactly how much fertilizer and lime to apply, if any is needed. Soil test results usually are processed by our lab within 8-10 days. Please follow the procedures for taking a proper soil sample in the instructions above. Only a pint of soil that is representative of the area you are sampling (mixed from several spots at random) is all that is needed to send to the lab. One sample can represent up to 15 acres if taken properly.

You may bring the sample to our office in a zip lock bag anytime Monday-Friday 8am-noon and 1-5pm. Our office is located near downtown Cartersville in the old schoolhouse (next to library) on 320 W. Cherokee Avenue. We are located in Room 112. Checks should be made out to "Bartow County 4-H". Call our office at 770-387-5142 if you have any questions.