

**Yes! And here's why...**

Whether you choose to do a soil pH test or a soil fertility test, you will be starting with a baseline reading. With these results you can accurately add fertilizers and amendments according to the needs of the plants you grow.

- ➔ Optimizing soil pH helps the plants take up nutrients.
- ➔ Why spend money on soil amendments and fertilizers if the pH and nutrients are already at the optimal rates?
- ➔ On the flip side, if your plants aren't thriving it may be due to a lack of nutrients or an undesirable pH.
- ➔ Over-fertilizing isn't necessary, it's not good for plants or for the environment. Fertilizing based on a soil test will lessen the chances of excess product running off into local waterways.



Got lawn? A soil test will help you to balance your soil pH and nutrients, your grass will thank you!

Grow veggies? A soil test will help you fertilize optimally. You'll be rewarded with a bigger yield.



## Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County



Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County provide research-based information for our county residents in the areas of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Family & Community Health Sciences, Marine Resources, Lawn & Garden, and 4-H Youth Development.

We provide information and programs to help educate our diverse population and improve their lives for the rapidly changing future.



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To learn more about Rutgers Cooperative Extension's upcoming programs and events, join our mailing list by contacting us at 732-349-1246

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Boards of County Commissioners. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.



**RUTGERS**  
New Jersey Agricultural  
Experiment Station  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
OCEAN COUNTY



**Should I get my soil tested?**



1623 Whitesville Road  
Toms River, NJ 08755

732-349-1246  
ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu

## Soil pH Testing

**Your soil sample can be dropped off at the Ag Building**

1623 Whitesville Road  
Toms River, NJ 08755

**Cost:** \$5.00

**Results:** Take approximately 1 week

### What to expect from your results

Ocean County Rutgers Master Gardeners and/or Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff will test your soil pH and make recommendations based on what you are growing. If the pH is low (acidic), we will let you know how much lime you should apply. If your soil pH is high (basic), we will let you know how much sulfur to apply.



### Examples of optimal pH ranges for some commonly grown plants

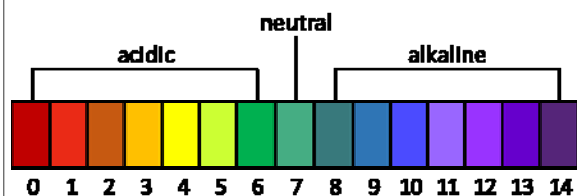
American Holly	4.5 - 5.5	White Pine	5.5 - 6.0
Blueberry	4.5 - 5.5	Tomato	6.2 - 6.8
Rhododendron	4.5 - 5.5	Pepper	6.5 - 7.0
Creeping Phlox	5.0 - 5.5	Boxwood	6.5 - 7.2
Tall Fescue	5.5 - 7.0	Arborvitae	6.8 - 7.2

## Taking a soil sample

Taking a soil sample is performed the same way for pH testing at the Ag Building or for a fertility test that you mail to the Rutgers Soil Lab.

- Using a shovel or trowel, dig a hole 6 inches deep. Set this soil aside. Then take a slice of soil from the side of the hole making sure to include soil from top to bottom. Put this soil in a bucket.
- Repeat this procedure from 10 - 15 times.
- Mix the soil in the bucket, breaking up any clumps to ensure all the samples are mixed well.
- Bring 1 cup of soil to the Ag Building for a pH test, or dry about 2 cups to mail to the Rutgers Soil Lab if doing a fertility test.
- Remember, if you have areas that are used for different types of plants, sample them separately.

### pH Scale



**Video instructions on how to sample your soil:**  
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-testing-lab/how-to.php>

## Soil Fertility Testing

**Buy your soil kit at the Ag Building**

1623 Whitesville Road  
Toms River, NJ 08755

**Cost:** \$20.00

**Mail sample to the Rutgers Soil Lab\***

Postage is not included

**Results:** Take approximately 2 weeks

### What to expect from your results

The Soil Lab at Rutgers will mail or email you a soil report which includes:

- Soil pH
- Macronutrient (P, K, Mg, Ca)
- Micronutrients (Zn, Cu, Mn, B, Fe)

The report will include recommendations for lime or sulfur to adjust the pH and fertilizer based on what you are growing. The report will also include the rate and timing of each application for two growing seasons.

The lab also offers additional testing such as lead screening, topsoil evaluation, and compost analysis. A full list of services and fees can be found on their website.

### \*Rutgers Soil Lab

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New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8554  
[njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-testing-lab/](http://njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-testing-lab/)