

## SOIL and WATER TEST FORM

(please print clearly)

**Soil and water samples are \$5 each, payable at [ufarasotaext.eventbrite.com](https://ufarasotaext.eventbrite.com) (search for: "soil test").**  
Payments of exact cash amount or check (to: Sarasota Board of County Commissioners) also accepted.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe the reason you are having your soil/water tested:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

**TURF:** Bahia \_\_\_\_\_ St. Augustine \_\_\_\_\_ Bermuda \_\_\_\_\_ Zoysia \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**FRUIT TREES:** Citrus \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ **VEGETABLES:** \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER:** (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Total # of samples \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 per sample = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Paid by: credit card \_\_\_ cash \_\_\_ check \_\_\_)

Received by \_\_\_\_\_ Location: Office \_\_\_ Satellite \_\_\_

Sample # \_\_\_\_\_ S or W \_\_\_\_\_ pH \_\_\_\_\_ ds/m \_\_\_\_\_ Soluble salts (ppm) \_\_\_\_\_

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## Why Take a Soil Sample?

Our native sandy soils are predominantly acidic except for the calcareous soils of South Florida. However, where native soils have been disturbed and new development has occurred, alkaline soils are often used as fill or topsoil. Many plant problems result when plants are growing in soils with an actual pH to which they are not adapted. Some plants need acidic soil; others will tolerate a wide range of soil pH. Very few grow well in soils with high pH (alkaline soils). Generally speaking, neutral soils are in the 6.0-7.0 pH range; acidic soils are below 6.0, and alkaline soils are above 7.0. If the soil pH is lower than you desire, lime can be added to raise the pH. If the soil pH is higher than desired, elemental sulfur can be added routinely to temporarily lower the pH, but it is not a permanent solution. The best solution to pH problems is to select plants that are adapted to your soils.

For more information on soil pH, refer to "Soil pH and the Home Landscape or Garden" (EDIS publication #SL256: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss480>).

## Desirable pH Ranges for Turf Grasses

pH < 5.5	pH 5.5-6.4	pH 6.5-7.4	pH > 7.4
Bermuda	Bermuda	Bermuda	Bermuda
Carpet	Carpet	St. Augustine	St. Augustine
Centipede	Centipede		Zoysia
Bahia	Bahia		

## How to Take a Soil Sample

1. Identify the area(s) to be sampled. Turf areas, vegetable gardens, and ornamental beds should all be sampled separately.
2. Using a shovel, trowel, or soil probe, remove soil from several spots in the sampling area. Be sure to take samples of soil, not mulch or plant material. Remove from 2-4 inches below the surface for turfgrass and 6-8 inches below the surface for vegetables and landscape plants.
3. For multiple samples from the same area, select several similar samples at random, place in a container, and mix together. Remove any plant material or mulch. Avoid combining soils that look different (e.g., light vs. dark, sandy vs. clay). Only combine samples for testing with other soil samples that appear similar. When in doubt, test samples separately.
4. Remove approximately 1-2 cups (1 pint) of soil and spread it out on newspaper or a similar material to dry. Allow the soil to air dry thoroughly before testing.
5. Select 1 cup of soil and place it into a clean bag or jar to submit for pH and soluble salts testing at the Extension office.

—OR—

5. If you would like nutrients tested in addition to pH and soluble salts, learn about options at our soil/water testing information page (<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota/how-do-i/get-soilirrigation-water-tested/>).

## How to Take an Irrigation Water Sample

1. Use a clean, plastic bottle to collect about 1 pint of irrigation water for sampling.
2. Allow the water source to run from the intended collection point for several minutes. Sample as close to the water source as possible to ensure that the sample represents the water source. If you are filtering the water, you may wish to sample the water both before and after filtration to assess the effect of the filtering operation. Filtration will only affect the physical characteristics (suspended solids) of the water.
3. Rinse the sample container and its lid several times in the flowing water. Do not use soap or detergent during this rinsing step.
4. Fill the container completely with the flowing water. Leave as little air as possible in the container. Tightly seal the lid immediately after filling the container to ensure against leakage.
5. Label the container.