



04 pH Test

A soil's pH is a measurement of its acidity or alkalinity. The pH of the soil affects the availability of different plant nutrients. Home test kits are available at local gardening stores and centers. These will provide a rough estimate. For further investigation, you can have your soil professionally tested. Knowing the pH of your soil will help you select plants adapted to grow in your soil's pH conditions.

What You'll Need:



Understanding Your Results:

- The pH scale runs from 1 to 14. 1 represents the most acidic and 14 represents the most alkalinity. 7 on the scale is neutral.
- Most plant nutrients are available at a neutral pH. Soil microbes are also most diverse and active at a neutral pH range.
- In strongly acidic soils, (pH 4.0 – 5.5) the following nutrients are in limited supply: phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium.
- In strongly alkaline soils, (pH 8 – 10) the following nutrients are in limited supply: phosphorus, iron, copper, zinc, and manganese.

Further Resources

The Washtenaw Conservation District, among many other county extension offices, also offer soil testing which helps in determining soil nutrient levels and deficiencies. The following link has helpful documents on how to prepare, pack, and ship your samples for their analysis. The Conversation District also has soil sample test boxes for purchase as well.

[Washtenaw Conservation District Soil Sampling](#)

Conclusion

By completing these easy experiments, you will have a better understanding of the characteristics of the soil in your yard or garden. By matching the soil characteristics to the plants you want to grow, will produce better lawns, vegetables, flowers, and trees.

