Soil Sampling: Know What’s in Your Dirt

The Missaukee Conservation District has been offering soil sampling cost share for the past 7 years. It will cost share up to $100 worth of soil sampling. How this works is that you come to our office with your receipt, results of your soil testing and fill out an information form or you can email all the information to Jodi DeHate. The Conservation District will pay 50% of the costs up to $100. This is for Missaukee County residents only. Homeowners and farmers alike can utilize this cost share benefit.

Why soil test in the first place? What’s the big deal? Would you put a cast on a limb without taking an X-ray? Probably not. You can’t fix what you don’t know is wrong. Instead of putting on a blend of fertilizer, a soil sample will let you know that you need. You may need more of one nutrient and less of another, but you won’t know till you do a soil test. This could save you quite a bit of money and probably some time as well. Let the Conservation District help you save even more money!

When is the right time to take a soil sample? There is no BEST time. It’s better to take a sample before you plant a crop or right after you’ve harvested a crop. Some people like to take samples in the spring and others in the fall. For consistencies sake, take samples the same time of the year and you’ll get better results. For those wanting to fertilize the lawn, spring is probably the better time frame.

There are 3 places in the area that will send off the soil samples . The MSU Extension office right next to the Conservation District offers soil sampling through the University labs. Right now, the MSU Extension office is closed, so you can do the online route by going to this link: [www.canr.msu.edu/spnl](http://www.canr.msu.edu/spnl). Both Ceres Solutions locations in McBain and Falmouth, and McBain Grain all offer to send in your soil samples. The Conservation District has put together a guide on costs and how to take you sample on our website at:

Farmers should be sampling 6-8 inches deep, gardeners should be taking samples 4-6 inches deep and for lawns samples only need to be from 4-6 inches deep. You can use a shovel, but soil testing probes work best. The Conservation District has a soil probe to borrow.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Jodi DeHate at [jodi.dehate@macd.org](mailto:jodi.dehate@macd.org) or 231.839.7193