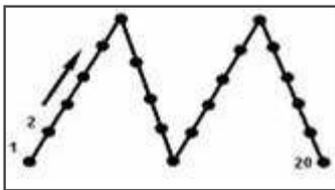
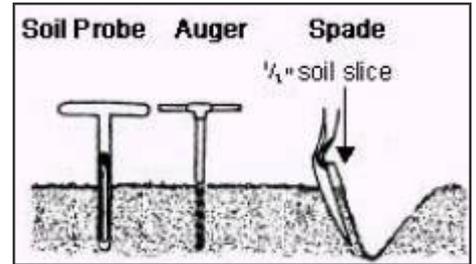


# Soil Samples

Beneficial results of a soil test depend on a good sample. The sample should represent the area it is taken from. A soil sample must be taken at the right time and in the right way. The tools used, area sampled, depth and uniformity of the sample, information provided, and packaging all influence the quality of the sample

- \* Take a sample well in advance to give yourself time to understand and act on the results.
- \* For sampling purposes divide the farm into fields or areas of between 2 – 4ha. You will need about 20 cores per area. Ensure that all soil cores are taken to the full 100mm depth.
- \* Use a soil-sampling probe, auger, spade or shovel. Tools should be either steel, stainless steel or chrome-plated. Do not use brass, bronze, or galvanized tools because they will contaminate samples with copper and/or zinc. If a shovel or a spade is used, dig a V-shaped hole to sample depth (4-6"), then cut a thin slice as shown. Mix soil cores for each sample in a plastic bucket. Make sure the bucket is completely clean and dry before use.



- \* Follow a 'W' soil sampling pattern to ensure that the sample is representative of the entire field.

We can help interpret your results.  
Please contact our representative for guidance

Recommended Soil Sampling Pattern

- \* Take separate samples from areas that differ in soil type, previous cropping history, slope, drainage or persistent poor yields.
- \* Avoid any unusual spots such as old fences, ditches, drinking troughs, dung or urine patches or where organic manure or lime has been heaped or spilled in the past.
- \* Do not sample a field for P and K until 3 - 6 months after last application of fertilizer P and K. Where lime has been applied allow a time lag of 2 years
- \* There are different types of soil tests, though it is recommended that Irish organic farmers and growers continue to use the same nutrient indexes as non-organic producers and focus on optimising major nutrient levels and pH while 'keeping an eye' that minor and trace nutrients are within prescribed ranges.

**SOIL TESTS should be viewed as a long term strategy with each field being tested every 3-5 years depending on intensity of production. They should be taken at the same time of year, ideally at the same stage in the rotation. These should be cross referenced with nutrient budgets for each field which will give a useful double check if excessive or insufficient amounts of nutrients are being applied. If the soil tests and nutrient budgets are in agreement, then no further action will be necessary. If they are at odds, e.g., more P is applied than removed but the P index is decreasing, this may indicate loss from the system which requires further investigation.**

If interested please enquire about the **Albrecht Soil Survey**. This gives an insight into the availability of the major and trace elements, cation exchange capacity and the ratios between specific nutrients.