SWEP PTY. LTD
ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES

FACTSHEET 2

COLLECTING SAMPLES FOR LAB ANALYSIS - SOIL

SWEP can send you a sample kit for all your soil analytical needs. Each kit contains sampling instructions, 2 sample bags and a reply paid express bag for your convenience. Please contact us if you would like a kit sent to you.

Sample depths

Sample to the appropriate depth according to land use or crop. Sample depth is set to match the typical depth of the feeder roots. As a guide, the following depths are commonly used:

Pasture 0-10cm

Vegetables/field crops (e.g. lucerne) 0-15cm

Tree and vine crops 0-25cm

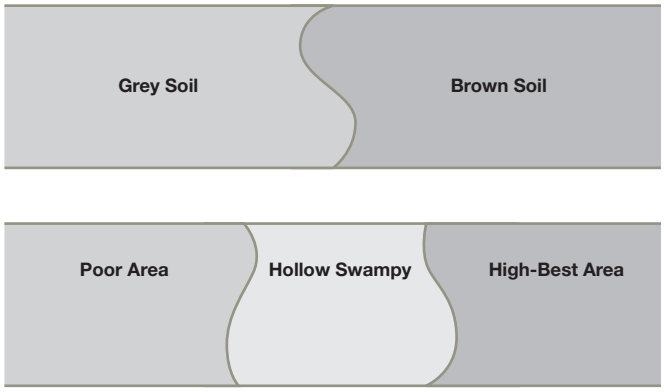

FIGURE 1: SELECTING THE AREA

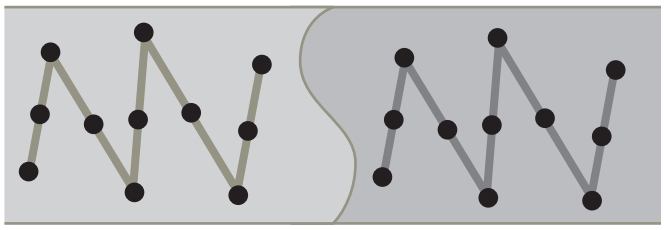

FIGURE 2: HOW TO COLLECT THE SAMPLES

Use a stainless steel core sampler

A stainless steel or PVC pipe are the preferred sampling tools, but you could also use an apple corer for shallow depths. As a last resort a clean, non-rusted shovel can be used, so long as you only collect soil from where the shovel hasn't touched the soil, as metals can distort results for trace element analyses. Make sure you are consistent with the sampling depth – take a ruler or tape with you to be certain.

Sample areas according to uniform features

Remember, you are looking to submit a 'representative' sample for a particular area. Any differences in soil type, topography, land use, crop variety or fertiliser history warrants separate samples **(see Figure 1)**. Observe where the soil changes in colour or texture or where growth patterns differ. These changes will often include hills, flats and fertiliser history. For uniform soils and land use/history, one 300g sample can represent up to 100 acres (40ha) of irrigated land, or up to 200 acres (80ha) of dry land.

Collect 20-30 cores per sample

The traditional method for collecting cores is by following a zig zag path **(see Figure 2)**. Most importantly though, choose a path so you can easily sample the same path next time. Ideally, you should retest every year following the same path, to the same depth at the same time of year. This way you can track changes over time. Avoid sampling patches of very good or very poor growth, e.g. near gates, troughs, livestock camps, dung or urine patches.

Mix the cores thoroughly in a clean plastic bucket or plastic bag

Remove any growing matter (grass etc.), mix the cores well and take a representative sample of 300 grams. Place this sample into a sealable plastic bag (either the SWEP issued sample bag or a zip lock lunch bag is ideal). Exclude as much air as possible and make sure each sample bag is labelled clearly.

Samples should be sent to the laboratory as soon as possible after collection.

It is recommended samples are sent via express post (included in SWEP sample kits) and early during the week for prompt results turnaround.

If you have any queries regarding sampling methods, techniques or preparation please contact us to discuss **prior to sample collection.**

Please be aware that samples are tested as received.

Preparation, collection, handling, labelling & transport of samples for analysis are fully and wholly the responsibility of the person or persons submitting the sample for analysis. The information provided in this factsheet is for use of a general nature only and is not intended to be relied upon as, nor to be a substitute for, specific professional advice. SWEP Pty Ltd will not be responsible for any loss or damage occasioned to any persons acting on or refraining from action as a result of any material in this publication.

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