

## How to Test Soil pH

The two primary ways to test soil pH from field samples are slurry testing and direct soil testing. It is important that the soil samples and tests take place in the same spots and the same way every time.

### Slurry pH Testing (use pH Test Strips or Chemical Test Kits)

The slurry method allows you to get a representative sample and measurement of an entire area with just one test. **Because soil pH can vary within a small area, be sure to take a representative sample.** The soil should be taken from the same depth below the surface each time you test.

When using the slurry method, take soil from next to the plants, as well as some from further away. (Keep these two samples separate.) While this means a little extra work, you will get measurements that are **more accurate since the amount of nutrients, types of soil, and moisture content can vary across a planted area.**

All these things affect the pH of soil, so it's important to track your pH at many points.

### How to Test Soil Using the Slurry Method

1. Gather some soil from the test area.
2. Take the homogeneous sample and add equal parts of soil and distilled or deionized (DI) water in a 1:1 ratio. So, for 25 grams of soil you would add 25 mL of water.
3. Stir the sample for 5 seconds.
4. Let it sit for 15 minutes.
5. Start stirring the sample again after 15 minutes, and take your measurement.

### Direct Soil pH Testing (Soil pH Pocket Testers)

Direct soil pH testing gives you the benefit of not needing to take soil samples, because the pH is tested right in the ground.

### How to Test Directly in Soil

1. Using an auger or ruler, first put a hole down into the soil. The hole needs to be the same depth each time you test to avoid pH discrepancies.

2. Add some distilled or deionized water to the hole; the soil should be damp but not saturated with water.
3. Insert your testing instrument into the hole, and allow for the reading to develop or stabilize.