



AMOS LAKE ASSOCIATION

Po Box 84
Ledyard CT 06339
Amoslake@gmail.com

Amos Lake Association's 2018 Soil Testing Day

Saturday, April 21, 2018

General Q&A's

What is Soil Testing Day?

- An annual event held before the planting/fertilizing season; it is offered as a community service and is free to all participants.
- The event is designed to help residents understand the composition and fertility of their soils and to suggest ways to enhance soil and plant health -- while protecting the environment and lake.
- It is one among several efforts being mounted to engage residents with our environment and build a positive ethic to benefit the quality of the Watershed and water bodies within.

Why have a Soil Testing Day?

- To raise awareness of the value of testing one's soil before planting or fertilizing
- To make the soil testing procedures and process less cumbersome for residents
- To demonstrate the merits of testing and answer basic questions on lawn/garden fertilization
- To help prevent unnecessary fertilizing, over-fertilizing, or inappropriate fertilizing
- To generate interest in 'everyday-type' voluntary actions to help protect the environment

Why should residents test their soil?

- To determine if their lawn or garden requires fertilization
- To determine the current fertility and composition of one's soil
- To receive expert advice on appropriate fertilization measures (whether to, what type, what combination of nutrients, how much to apply, and when)
- To ensure appropriate fertilization and help avoid introducing environmental risks
- To ultimately have a healthier environment while maintaining attractive lawns & gardens

What are the benefits of participating?

- It's easy – all of the sampling materials and instructions are provided for you
- It's informative – learn about your soil's composition and fertility needs
- It's valuable – helps guide original planting and ongoing maintenance actions
- It's typically free, eliminates the need to buy soil sample containers and personally mail them
- It could save resident time and effort – findings may indicate fertilization is not needed
- It could save money - by avoiding the expense of unnecessary/inappropriate fertilization
- It helps the watershed and our water bodies by promoting thoughtful & customized application

What's involved?

- It involves drawing soil core(s) from one's lawn/garden and then testing at the Soil Test Lab of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) in New Haven.
- A Soil Sampling Site will be manned on Saturday, 4/21, at the Preston Transfer Station, 108 Ross Road, or Flemings Feed 353 Route 165 Preston from 10 – 3 PM; soil samples need to be dropped-off by 3 PM at these locations; returned soil samples will then be forwarded to the CT Soil Test Lab for nutrient testing with results mailed directly back to participants.

How do I participate, get fertilizing suggestions, and receive answers to questions?

- Follow the directions contained in Sampling Instructions and Transmittal Instructions.
- Or stop by one or our partner locations at the Flemings Feed 353 Route 165, Preston Town Hall or Preston Public Library to pick up a soil kit.
- For lawn care, creating buffers, and fertilizing suggestions, refer to the literature displayed and made available from the DEEP and ALA and displayed at the Soil Sampling Site
- If you have questions on soil fertility or testing, contact CAES see [Test Lab Contact Information below](#).

What if I plan to fertilize before the test results are available?

- We realize some property owners may want to fertilize before the test results can be returned (estimate two weeks from Soil Testing Day at the outside)
- If it's inconvenient to defer application, we suggest you still participate so you will have your test results in hand well before fall and can make the right fertilizing decisions in advance

Who is sponsoring Soil Testing Day?

- The Amos Lake Association (ALA) has taken the lead in launching Soil Testing Day; ALA is a 501(c)(3) Organization focused on protecting the quality of Amos Lake and its Watershed.
- ALA is partnering with the Town of Preston, Flemings Feed, and the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, which provides soil testing and fertilizing guidance.

Sampling Instructions

Use 1 or 2 zip-lock plastic baggies to securely contain your soil samples. The number of baggies needed depends on the uniformity of your soil and whether you want both your lawn and garden analyzed.

- For each area to be tested, submit representative samples by removing 10–20 narrow slices or cores of soil (use a garden trowel or other sampling device). Mix slices or cores together thoroughly in a bucket or other container and place 1–2 cups of the mixture in a sealable, waterproof zip-lock bag. If more than one area are sampled, repeat this procedure for each area. If samples are wet let them dry before packaging.
- Sampling depths. For lawns, Christmas tree plantations and field grown woody plants, sample the upper 0-4 inches of soil. For gardens, landscape plantings and commercial row crop production fields, sample the upper 0-6 inches of soil. For plants grown in containers, sample the entire depth of the potting media.
- For unusual or difficult problem areas, contact the Soil Test Laboratory at (203)-974-8521 before sampling.

For each separate area to be tested, thoroughly mix the soil cores together in a bucket; then pour this mixture into a plastic baggie until ½ full. Do likewise with cores from second area using a separate baggie, etc. Ideally these soil samples should be dry; if necessary, moist samples will be accepted

Label each baggie with your last name, sample #, and sampling area description for ease in interpreting results (e.g., *Smith - #1 – Front Lawn*). Use a Sharpie marker to label in space designated on baggie; if a Sharpie or similar permanent-ink pen is not handy, one can be borrowed when samples are dropped off.

Transmittal Instructions

Complete the Soil Transmittal Form below, fold these Instructions in half (with the Transmittal Form facing outwards) and wrap around the baggies containing the soil samples, securing with rubber bands. Return the resulting package to the Soil Sampling Collection Site at the Preston Transfer Station at 108 Ross Road, or Flemings Feed 353 Route 165 on 4/21/17 between 10AM and 3:00 PM.

Soil Test Results

Test results are typically mailed back within 2-3 weeks; if an unusually large number of residents participate, turnaround timing may be delayed. Soil samples are tested for texture (sand, loam, clay composition, etc.), organic matter, and nutrients (including pH, nitrate nitrogen, ammonium nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and salts). Based on test results, applications of limestone, fertilizer, and compost or manure are often suggested. The proper time and rates of application for each nutrient amendment are typically stated. When requested, organic amendments can also be suggested. The resulting report should aid in gauging fertilizer applications and in correcting deficiencies or excesses. The CAES website contains additional information on interpreting results.

Test Lab Contact Information

Contact Gregory Bugbee at the Slate Laboratory, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station **Phone** - 203/974-8521; **Fax** – 203/974-8502; **Email** – gregory.bugbee@ct.gov
Mailing address – CAES – Slate Laboratory, Soil Testing, PO Box 1106, New Haven, CT06504

Physical address (USPS, Fed Ex, etc) – [as above], 123 Huntington St, New Haven, CT06511

CAES website – www.ct.gov/caes Soil testing
www.ct.gov/caes/cwp/view.asp?a=2836&q=378202

This event is intended to raise awareness of the importance of testing one's soil *before* fertilizing --- to ensure that it is necessary and appropriate to conditions, to provide the correct nutrient mix, and to ensure that it is properly applied. The net result will be healthier lawns and gardens and, importantly, a healthier lake and Watershed environment not subject to unnecessary or over-application of fertilizer. Reduced time, effort, and fertilizer expenses can likewise be expected by most participants.

**Simply participate in sampling day,
and you're on your way to a healthier lawn and environment;**

Amos Lake Association's 2018 Soil Testing Day Soil Sample Transmittal Form

(Please print legibly; attach additional sheet if required)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Sample	Sampling Area Description	Items Grown	Comments
# 1	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____