

Tips for Getting the Dairy One Soil Test – for NYC Urban Farmers

Cornell Cooperative Extension's go-to soil nutrient test is **Dairy One** – an independent company with links to Cornell, not to be confused with the Cornell [Comprehensive Assessment of Soil Health](#) (also a good test, provides more in-depth results but more expensive and longer turnaround time).

Collecting the sample: We sample the top 6 inches, collecting samples (aka soil cores) with a soil probe. You can also use a trowel – see the reverse side of this page, especially the middle panel. Move aside mulch or other undecomposed organic matter on the surface before getting your soil sample.

You can mail samples in quart-sized ziploc bags, filled to around 2/3. If sending multiple samples, be sure to label each one! We usually ship in a Priority Mail box (a little over \$7 for the small box). Along with submission form(s), ship to **Dairy One, 730 Warren Road, Ithaca NY 14850**.

Submission form:

Details here: <https://dairyone.com/services/agronomy-services/soil-analysis/submitting-a-sample/>

1. Follow the Dairy One link above, then open and print **Form H** (“Home Garden & Lawn”).
2. In the table, each row represents one soil sample. Write a “Sample ID” that matches whatever you wrote on the sample’s bag.
3. You can ignore “Plant Name,” and under “Crop Code” use “MVG” (mixed vegetables).
4. Don’t worry too much about “Soil Texture” and “Soil Drainage,” answer however you see fit. (Most NYC urban ag soils are sandy or loamy with excellent drainage—but not all.)
5. Under “Soil Test,” select either 833E or 833M, should be same numbers either way. The subtotal will be **\$13 per sample** (unless you decide to add supplemental services, listed on the second page of Form H—we generally don’t).
6. OPTIONAL: You can copy your local Extension specialist on the results, just fill in name and email address under “Consultant.” (e.g. in NYC: Sam Anderson, swa39@cornell.edu)
7. Write in big, bold letters at the top of the form: “OLD HOMEOWNER FORMAT”

You will automatically get the “new homeowner format” within a week or so, but if you follow Step 6 above, you should also get the “old homeowner format” a week or so after that. (We think the old homeowner format is way better.)

Alternative: If you are impatient like us, as soon as you get the results you can call or email Dairy One and ask for the old homeowner format, and they will usually email it that same day.

Note on the results: These tests are very useful for the data (pH, OM%, lbs/acre of different nutrients, etc.), but take the “comments” section with a grain of salt. It will often be good advice, but some specific recommendations may not apply to your soil. The same goes for essentially all other soil tests, not just Agro-One; their calculations probably cannot fully account for the unique constructed soils most growers are working with in NYC. We’re working on formulas to convert these tests to different urban ag soils; in the meantime, always feel free to forward your results and we’ll let you know what we think. That’s what we’re here for!

Sam Anderson, swa39@cornell.edu

"Old homeowner format"

Source: <https://www.pennington.com/all-products/grass-seed/resources/how-to-take-an-accurate-soil-sample>

