

## Soil testing

Good Morning Gardeners. I would like to give you a little dirt on soil testing to help you make your lawn or garden a success. Soil testing is not just finding out the pH of your soil. It is used to discover what is really going on under your lawn or garden. Don't get me wrong, the pH is very important, but is it the most important part of a soil test? No.

Let me tell you why. There are five different elements present in your soil that can affect your soil as much as the pH level. Those five elements are Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K), Calcium (Ca) and Magnesium (Mg). Why are these elements important? Nitrogen helps green up your lawn. Phosphorus helps root and shoot development. Potassium helps regulate Co<sub>2</sub> and water intake. Calcium helps to maintain chemical balance in the soil, reduces soil salinity, and improves water penetration. Finally, Magnesium helps with photosynthesis and helps give grass its green color.

When you get the results of a soil test you will see these nutrients listed with numbers either next to them or under them. It looks like it is in a foreign language. This test will tell you if the soil is deficient in these nutrients. Not enough nutrients present in the soil is usually the easiest fix. You identify the needed nutrients listed on the test results and apply as needed. When in the soil test results report there is an excess of nutrients, the issue is usually caused by a magnesium deficiency. Magnesium binds your soil and prevents the nutrients and water from flowing freely in the ground. How do you fix this problem? I recommend using Natural Alternative® Sulfur with Protilizer®. Not only does it break up the magnesium in the soil, but it helps leach the soil of the extra nutrients, allowing the right flow throughout the soil. Excessively high magnesium can also cause the pH to be high. Which brings me back to my original point that the pH isn't as important as you think. All the elements in the soil impact the quality of the soil. If you don't have a clear understanding of what else, outside of the pH level, is going on underground, you may never have a successful lawn or garden by knowing the pH level alone.