

Soil Sampling for Lead

In this two-part activity, you will practice taking a soil sample for the purpose of lead testing, review the results, and discuss implications for food safety.

KEY TERMS

Lead: an element that is naturally found in small amounts in the earth's crust, but can also be found in amounts that are hazardous to human health in some soils, particularly in urban areas

KEY TERM 2: Insert definition here

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Shovel
- Clean plastic bucket
- Measuring cup or jar
- Clean plastic bag
- Label for bag (if not pre-printed)
- Marker for labeling the bag

Alternate Supplies

- Soil auger or corer may be used instead of shovel



How do you do this?

Part 1 - Taking the Sample

1. Using the shovel, soil auger or corer, take 8-12 samples from different areas of the farm or garden. If soil has not yet been disturbed, you would take the sample from the first 1-2 inches of soil. However, for a site that already has beds established, you'll want to take the samples from 6 inches.
2. Mix all the samples together in the bucket.
3. Measure out about a cup of the mixture to send into the lab.
4. Let this cup of soil air dry and then place it in a clear plastic bag with a label.

Part 2 - Reviewing the Results

1. Review and discuss the soil test results as a group
2. Talk about options for starting or continuing to farm on a site that tests positive for lead. Ex. Install raised beds and bring clean soil into the site



Produce Safety

WHERE ARE RISKS ON THE FARM?

What does it mean for my farm?

Questions for discussion with co-learners:

- Do you think your farm may be at risk for lead contamination? Why or why not?
- If you found lead on your farm, how would you address it?

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL LEARNING

- Need to identify additional resources

