

PLANT TISSUE SAMPLING - ALFALFA

When to Sample - Plant Tissue

Alfalfa plant tissue samples are collected at 1/10 bloom.

How to Sample - Plant Tissue

Tissue samples should be representative of the area to be fertilized. The sampler should traverse each sample area collecting samples perpendicularly or diagonally throughout the sample area. Sampling areas should be uniform with respect to soil texture, slope, variety and irrigation design and should not be larger than 10-20 acres. Problem areas should be sampled separately.

Volume and Type of Plant Parts to Collect

Collect leaves, stems, and whole tops from 4 to 6 plants within the sample area. Alfalfa must be separated as follows:

Cut the whole plant approximately 2 inches from the ground. Bend the whole plant and fold in half. Cut off the mid stems and keep separate. Sort and discard the lower stem. Strip the leaves from the middle stem and retain the leaves as one sample (#1) and the middle stems as another (#2). The whole top consists of both leaves and stems and is the third part of the sample (#3).

You should have three separate samples:

- (1) Leaves
- (2) Mid Stems
- (3) Whole tops

Label each carefully.

Labeling, Packaging, and Shipping

All plant tissue and soil samples should be labeled with your name and address, sample identification, crop, stage of growth, previous problems (if any) and the required analyses. Plant tissue should be placed in paper bags and soil samples in plastic bags. Plant tissue samples should be delivered to the laboratory as soon as possible in order to ensure freshness. If held for more than one day, plant tissue samples should be stored in paper bags at room temperature until delivered or shipped. Analytical nutrient values are not affected if samples are allowed to air dry naturally. This becomes a problem if moisture is present and mold develops.

As an alternative to delivering directly to our laboratory, plant tissue and soil samples can be shipped via overnight UPS, or other private couriers.

When in doubt

If you have any questions or require assistance relating to the above, please visit www.fglinc.com or call Fruit Growers Laboratory's Agronomic Services.

