

COTTON

PROCEDURES FOR SOIL AND LEAF SAMPLING

Soil and leaf analyses can help determine the fertilization needs of your crops and assist in identifying problem conditions if they exist. This guide will help you collect representative and meaningful samples which will assure accurate laboratory analysis data.

Petiole analysis is most useful in evaluating the nutrient status or toxic levels of a growing crop especially when results can be compared with interpretive guides.

Preplant or postplant soil analyses provide useful information for measurement of fertility or toxicity levels and to substantiate amendment requirements. Data from soil analyses is most meaningful when used in conjunction with leaf tissue analysis results.

SOIL SAMPLING - COTTON

When to Sample - Soils

Preplant soil analysis data is used to determine the most appropriate root stock and helps determine the need for preplant fertilizers or soil amendments.

Soil samples may be collected throughout the year to monitor soil conditions or to determine the causes for poor growth in specific locations.

How to Sample - Soils

Soil samples should be representative of the area to be treated. If possible, areas should be uniform with respect to soil texture, slope, variety and irrigation design. Areas sampled should not be larger than 10-20 acres. Problem areas should be sampled separately and compared with samples taken from adjacent non problem areas. The location of the sample areas should be noted and marked on a parcel or planting map for future reference.

Soil samples should contain at least 10-20 cores for each designated area. Samples should be collected from the irrigated area, at or near the drip line of the trees. Retrieve an equal amount of soil from the surface to a depth of 18 inches (0-18"). Soil core samples should be placed in a clean bucket and thoroughly mixed. Approximately a quart volume of this soil will be required for analysis purposes.



LEAF SAMPLING - COTTON

When to Sample

To determine the nutrient status of Cotton, there are five preferred times to collect leaf blade and petiole samples: a) first square, b) first bloom, c) peak bloom, d) first open ball, and e) at maturity. For “in season” nutrient monitoring or for problem diagnosis, other sampling times may be appropriate.

How to Sample

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

Volume and Type of Plant Tissue to Collect

Collect 60-80 petioles from each area. Collect petioles from the most recently fully expanded leaf on the main stem (usually the 3rd or 4th leaf from the tip). If Total Nitrogen is desired, keep 30-40 leaf blades as well.

Labeling, Packaging, and Shipping

All plant tissue and soil samples should be labeled with your name and address, sample identification, crop, variety, age, stage of growth, previous problems (if any) and the required analysis. 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 to insure 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.