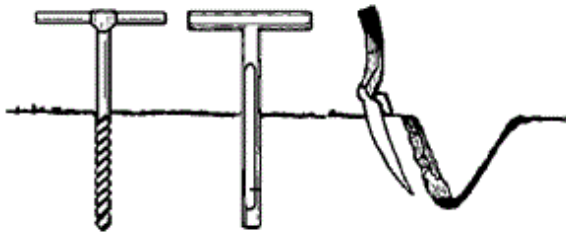


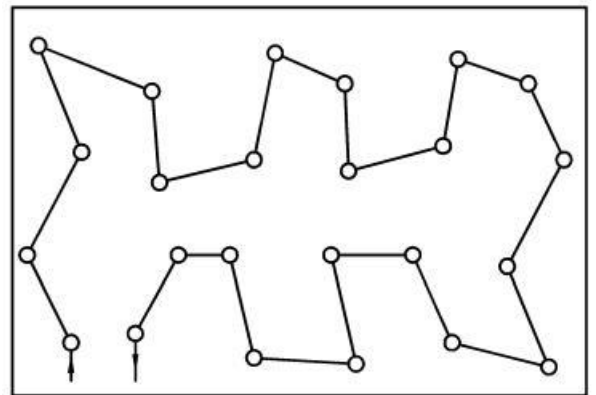
Collections Steps

1. **Area of interest:** The primary goal when collecting a soil sample is to gather a representative sample of the area of interest. This may be a paddock, garden bed or specific region. For example, a sample can be collected to discover the underlying nutritional issue in an area of crop disease. In this case the area of interest is only where disease is present. Combining poor areas and good areas will result in a report full of meaningless numbers. It is important to collect a sample that represents a clearly defined area, not mixing different soil types, and differently management practices.



2. **Sampling depth:** The sampling depth is chosen based on the rooting depth or how deep nutrients can be incorporated. Generally, in vegetables a surface sample would be 22cm deep. In pasture 15cm may be chosen. A deeper sample will result in a deeper amendment program in fertiliser recommendations. This may increase application rates.
3. **Collection Tools:** There can be a large variability between surface layers and lower layers of the soil. For this reason, it is important to take an even sample throughout the sampling depth. This is effectively achieved with a soil probe to take a cylindrical core. A rust-free shovel is sufficient (rusty buckets and tools can distort micronutrient analysis and should be avoided). A PVC pipe can be used to take an even sample core.

4. **Representative Sample:** To represent an area, at least 10 samples should be collected and mixed together in a clean plastic bucket. This mixing process provides an average of the nutrient levels in the area of interest.



Avoid contaminated areas in the vicinity of gateways, animal tracks, animal camps, fences, troughs, trees, fertiliser or lime dumps, planter or seeder loading areas. The bottom of gullies and water holding depressions or any spot which does not represent the area of interest.

5. **Sample Labelling:** After mixing the samples in the bucket thoroughly, fill a sandwich zip lock bag with 200grams or a cup full of soil. Label with date and "sample name". This process is then repeated for each sampling area.

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