**Soil Testing**

***Soil is Where it all Starts***

**Why Have Your Soil Tested?**

Testing soil can give information on the soil’s ability to supply nutrients for best plant growth, thereby providing a scientific basis for deciding if and how much lime and nutrients are needed. Also, soil tests indicate when the applications are no longer needed. The saying, “if one pound is good, two are better and three must be best” does not apply to fertilizer.

**When is the Best Time to Test?**

Testing soil about once every three years is usually adequate. You can sample soil anytime it is not frozen, although some times are better than others. Sampling in early spring or late fall assures that you will have recommendations before buying lime and fertilizer. It is important to plant trees and shrubs that grow well in the existing soil conditions (clay, sand, acid vs. alkaline, etc.) rather than try to change the soil to meet the needs of the trees and shrubs planted.

**Sample Properly**

One of the most important steps in soil testing is taking the sample, because only a small portion of the soil you bring to the laboratory is actually tested. Remember that you are taking samples to obtain information and recommendations on which to base fertilizer and lime applications.

**Where to Sample?**

To ensure that the soil sample is representative of the area to be treated, you need to make a composite sample. Collect small samples from at least five locations in the area and combine them into one sample – a composite sample.

**What is the Soil Testing for?**

It includes testing for soil pH, lime requirement, phosphorus (P), potassium (K), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), organic matter (OM), and cation exchange capacity (CEC). Fertilizer recommendations are based on the crops to be grown and the soil test results.

**What Does the Test Cost?**

The cost of a residential soil test kit self-mailer is $18.00. The soil test self-mailer provides you with everything you need to make the process easy. For more information visit [www.oaklandconservationdistrict.com](http://www.oaklandconservationdistrict.com).

**Where Can I Get a Soil Test?**

Order Online – [www.oaklandconservationdistrict.com](http://www.oaklandconservationdistrict.com) *($1.00 service fee)*

Request by Mail – 248-922-7822

You soil test will be sent to you via email by **The Rock River Laboratory, Inc**.