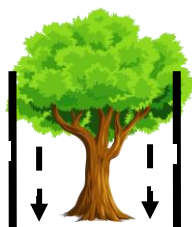


BASIC SOIL SAMPLING PROCEDURES

How to pull soil core samples: Sweep aside any organic matter (leaves, plant material, etc.) from the top of the soil. Use either a metal apple corer or a butter knife to remove a core sample that is approximately 1 inch in diameter by 3 inches deep. If you're unable to obtain 3 inches in depth collect all samples at the depth you were able to reach (i.e. 2 inches). Collect samples as described below based on your situation.

Sampling a uniform bare field or established pasture/hayfield? Pull 5 cores randomly from different parts of the field (note what locations in the field for your own records). If the field has plants growing try to take the 5 cores halfway between the plant stem and dripline (edge of the leaf canopy). Avoid areas that do not accurately represent the field conditions (i.e. along the fence or ditch, big depressions, etc.). Put all cores in the **SAME** bag. Make sure the bag is not more than half full. Seal the bag with the air left inside it – your biology needs to breathe! Clearly mark the **OUTSIDE** of the bag with the sample name (i.e. NW field bare soil) and date. **NOTE:** Repeat this procedure for each distinct field or pasture (each field/pasture will have it's own sample bag).

Sampling a pasture/field that is NOT uniform (mix of healthy crops, weedy patches, sick plants, bare patches, etc.)? Take at least 3 cores from each different section you've identified and place in its **OWN BAG** (weeds or sick plants shouldn't be placed in the same bag as healthy plants!). If you have 3 different sections, you should test 3 separate samples. Label the sample based on the section it was taken from, i.e. "thistles", "healthy plants", "bare patch". Make sure each bag is not more than half full. Seal the bag with the air left inside it – your biology needs to breathe! Clearly mark the **OUTSIDE** of the bag with the sample name (i.e. weedy patch NW field) and date.



Sampling a specific plant or tree? Pull 3 cores from around each plant, tree, etc. Take the sample about halfway between the plant stem/trunk and dripline (sample at arrows). If sampling different species of plants or healthy vs. unhealthy plants, put the cores for each type in their own bag. Uniform tree species/health place samples in the same bag (3 cores for each tree – see mixing below). Make sure the bag is not more than half full. Seal the bag with the air left inside it – your biology needs to breathe! Clearly mark the **OUTSIDE** of the bag with the sample name and date.

Sampling a compost pile or vermicast? **Small Pile:** Grab a small handful from a minimum of 5 different areas, making sure to pull from different depths and locations around the pile. **Large Windrow:** Take 20 tsp sized samples from 20 different areas, making sure to pull from different depths and locations around the pile. Place all samples together in a single, labeled, resealable plastic bag. Seal the bag with the air left inside it – your biology needs to breathe! Clearly mark the **OUTSIDE** of the bag with the sample name and date. Submit a minimum of ¼ cup to maintain sample conditions for testing (see mixing instructions below).

Sampling a compost extract? Use a disposable water bottle. Fill the container ⅓ full of the liquid you want to have assessed. Leave the remainder of the container empty to maximize headspace for air exchange. Secure the cap with duct tape and place it in a sealed plastic bag. Clearly mark the outside of the container with the sample name. **MUST BE SENT OVERNIGHT MAIL**

Sampling a compost tea? Compost Tea is extremely time sensitive. If you're in the local area we can test your compost tea – contact me to set this one up!

MIXING INSTRUCTIONS: Collected more than ¼ cup? No problem, simply place all of the same sample in a clean container and mix up well. Take at least a ¼ cup of the well mixed material and place in a resealable plastic bag. Label clearly on the outside of the bag.