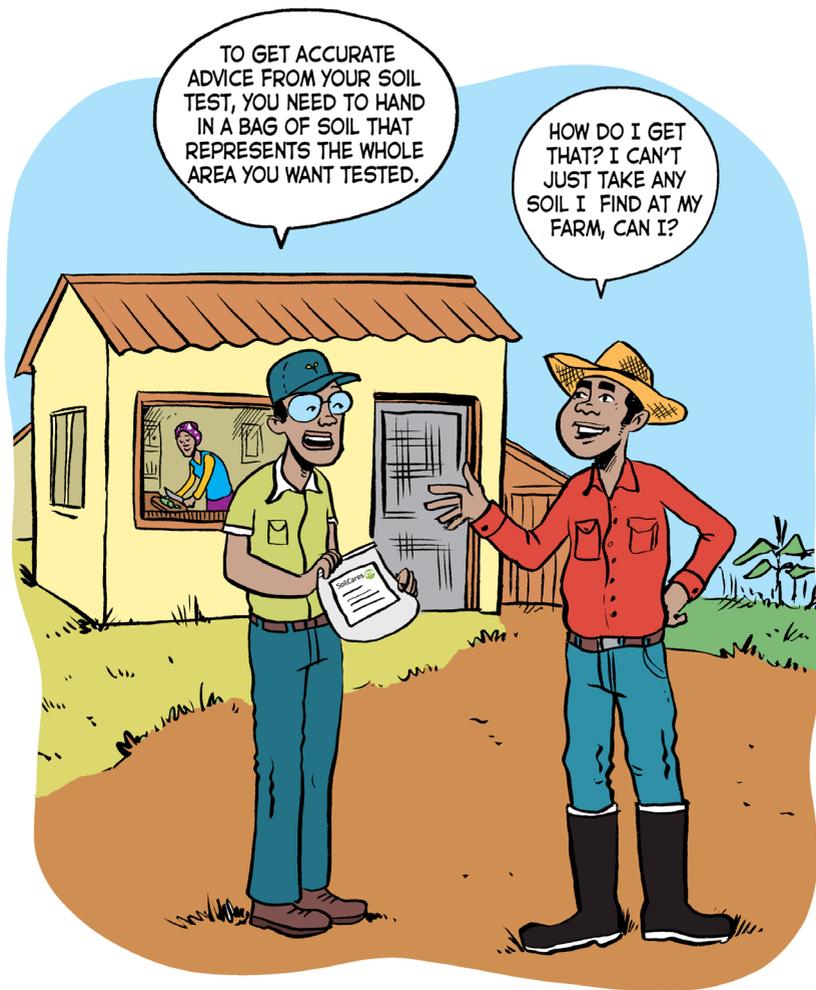


How do I collect a good soil sample?



How do I collect a good soil sample?

Words Explained

Auger: A tool that is used for taking soil subsamples

Fertilizer: Something added to the soil to help the plants grow

Nutrients: Tiny particles in the soil that a crop needs as food

Soil sample: A bag of soil that represents the part of the field that you want tested

Subsample: Soil collected from one point in your field

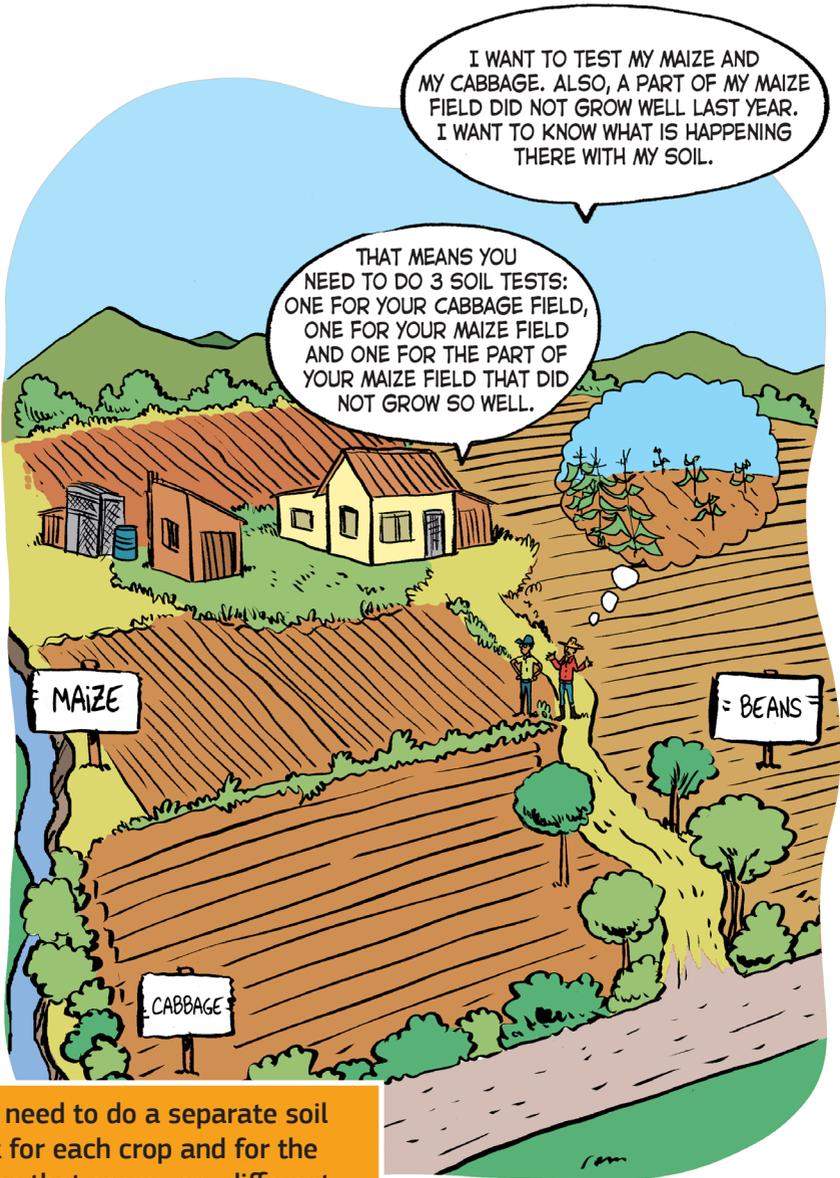
Soil test: The analysis of a soil sample to know the nutrient levels and the acidity of the soil

THAT'S RIGHT.
THE RESULTS OF YOUR
SOIL TEST DEPENDS ON THE
SAMPLE YOU HAND IN. BUT
FIRST WE NEED TO LOOK AT
YOUR FARM TO SEE HOW
MANY SAMPLES YOU
NEED TO COLLECT.



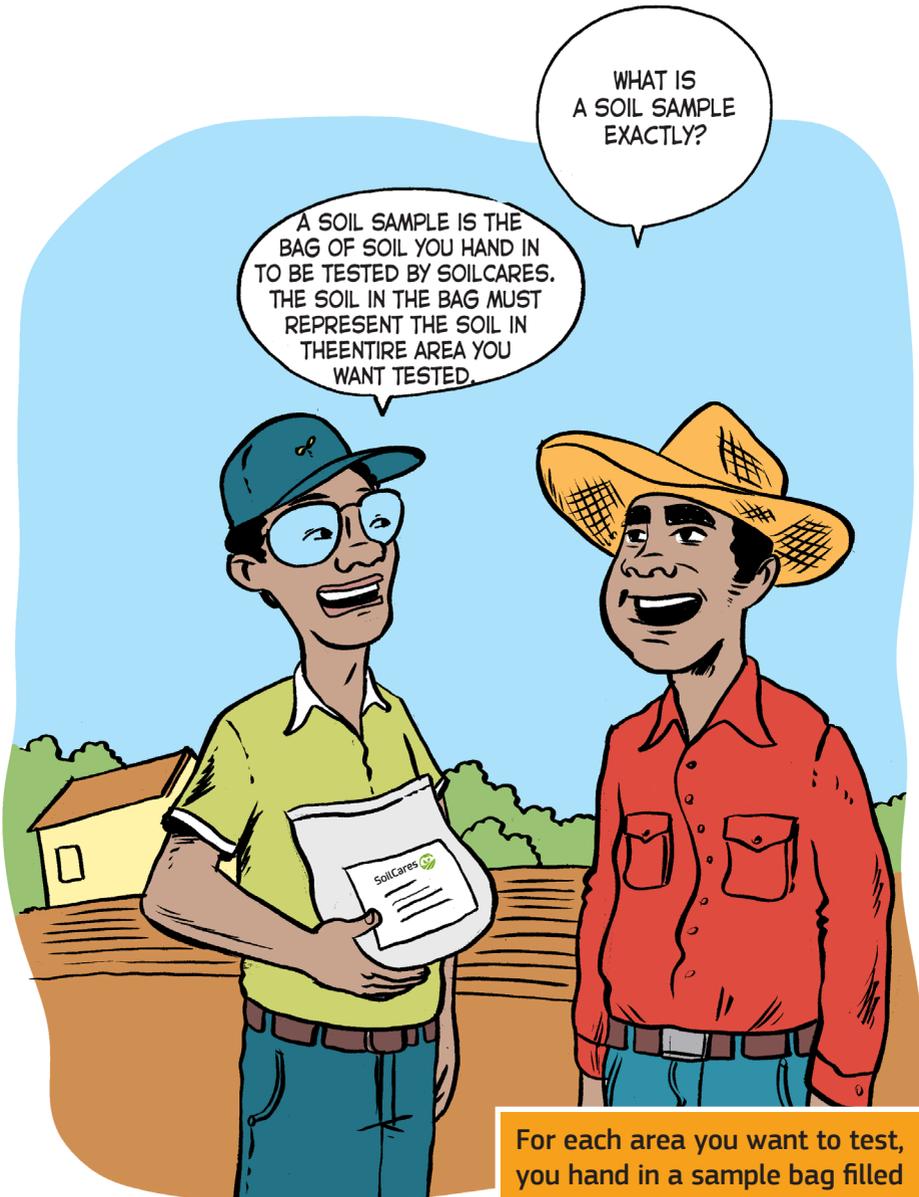
Collecting the soil has to be done in a clear and organized way to get the correct results from the soil test.





You need to do a separate soil test for each crop and for the areas that seem very different from the rest of the field. Because for each crop and for the areas that seem different, you may need a different fertilizer.





WHAT IS
A SOIL SAMPLE
EXACTLY?

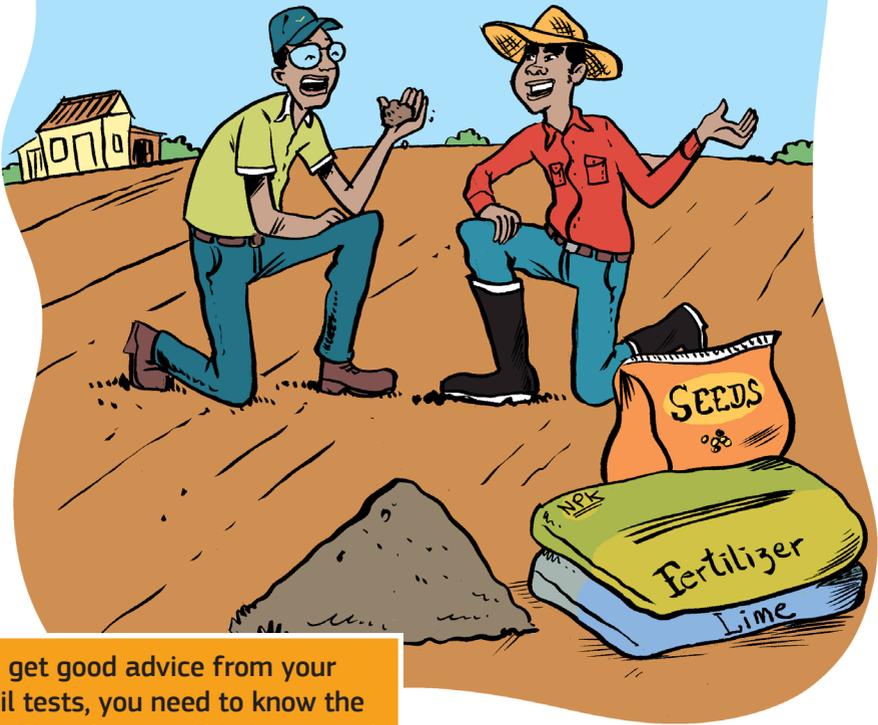
A SOIL SAMPLE IS THE
BAG OF SOIL YOU HAND IN
TO BE TESTED BY SOILCARES.
THE SOIL IN THE BAG MUST
REPRESENT THE SOIL IN
THE ENTIRE AREA YOU
WANT TESTED.

For each area you want to test, you hand in a sample bag filled with soil. For bigger areas, you need to collect 1 sample per 5 acres.



WHEN SHOULD I COLLECT
THE SOIL TO PUT IN THE
SAMPLE BAGS?

YOU NEED TO COLLECT
YOUR SOIL SAMPLE BEFORE
PLANTING, BEFORE APPLYING
ANY LIME, FERTILIZER OR
MANURE ON YOUR FIELD.



To get good advice from your soil tests, you need to know the fertility of your soil in its natural state. This means you collect a sample before you add any inputs to your field.



AND HOW DO I MAKE SURE THE SOIL IN MY SAMPLE BAG REPRESENTS THE ENTIRE AREA I AM TESTING FOR?

LET'S START WITH YOUR CABBAGEFIELD. TAKE 20 SUBSAMPLES WITHIN YOUR CABBAGE FIELD. YOU HAVE TO TAKE THESE SAMPLES IN A ZIGZAG (W) PATTERN."

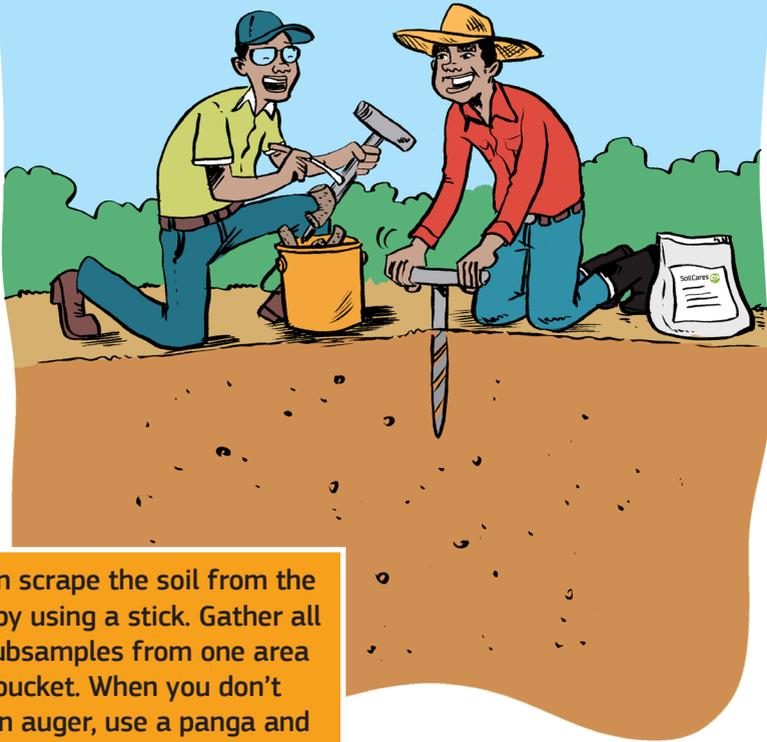


The 20 subsamples are put all together to make up one sample. To let the sample represent the entire field you need to take the 20 subsamples in a zigzag (W) pattern across your field.



TO TAKE A SUBSAMPLE, PUSH THE AUGER 20 CM DEEP INTO THE SOIL STRAIGHT DOWN. TURN THE AUGER SEVERAL TIMES, PULL THE AUGER OUT AND SCRAPE THE SOIL FROM THE AUGER INTO THE BUCKET.

AH, BY GOING 20 CM DOWN INTO THE GROUND I CAN MAKE SURE THE SAMPLE REPRESENTS THE DIFFERENT SOIL LAYERS.

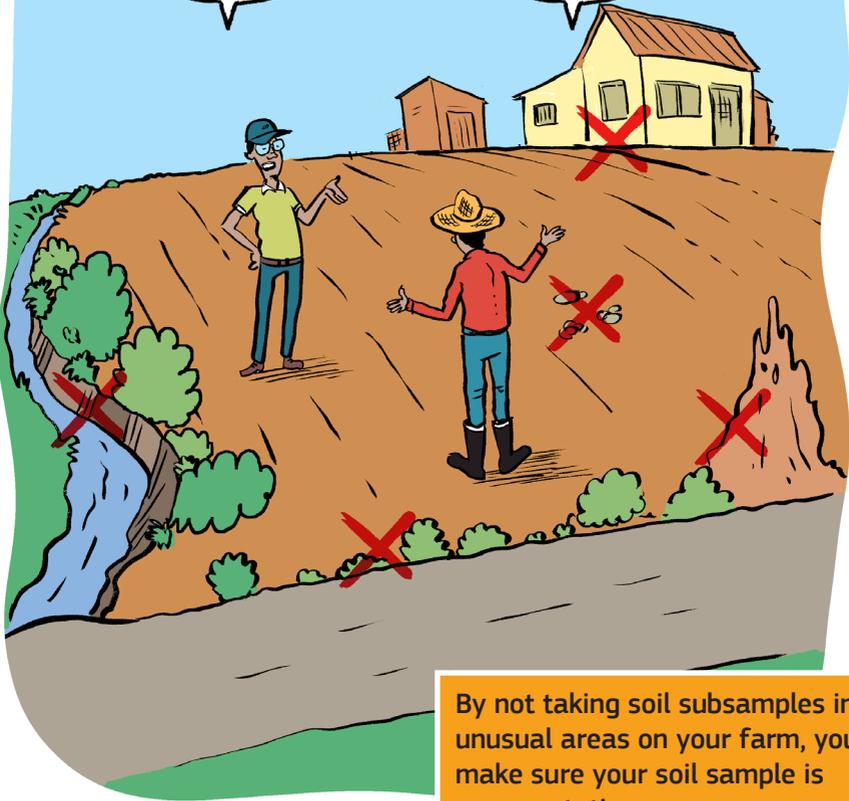


You can scrape the soil from the auger by using a stick. Gather all your subsamples from one area in the bucket. When you don't have an auger, use a panga and take a slice from the soil and collect the soil in the bucket.



WHEN YOU WALK
ACROSS YOUR FARM TO
TAKE THE SUBSAMPLES,
YOU SHOULD AVOID
ANY UNUSUAL AREAS.

SO I SHOULDN'T
TAKE SAMPLES NEAR
DITCHES, ROADS, OLD
MANURE HEAPS, ANTHILLS
OR CLOSE TO
MY HOUSE.



By not taking soil subsamples in unusual areas on your farm, you make sure your soil sample is representative.





THIS PART OF MY FIELD IS PLOUGHED. HOW SHOULD I TAKE A SUBSAMPLE HERE?

YOU PUT THE AUGER HALF WAY DOWN THE RIDGE.

When your field is ploughed don't take a subsample on top of the ridge or at the bottom. Take a subsample halfway down the ridge.





MY NEIGHBOUR'S
FIELD IS ON A HILL,
HOW SHOULD HE TEST
HIS SOIL?

WHEN YOUR
FIELD IS ON A HILL
YOU NEED TO FILL TWO
SAMPLE BAGS OF SOIL.
ONE FOR THE SOIL WITHIN
THE UPPER PART AND ONE
FOR THE SOIL WITHIN
THE LOWER PART OF
THE HILL.

When it rains, the water that runs down the hill washes rich topsoil from the top to the bottom. This is why the fertility of the soil on the top of a hill and the soil at the bottom are different. That is why these areas need to be fertilized differently so you need to get two tests done.



NOW I HAVE 20 SUBSAMPLES
IN MY BUCKET FROM MY
CABBAGE FIELD. WHAT
SHOULD I DO WITH IT?"

PUT ALL THE SOIL THAT YOU
HAVE COLLECTED IN YOUR BUCKET
INTO THE SAMPLE BAG. IT SHOULD BE
AS MUCH AS A PACK OF FLOUR. NOW
COLLECT 20 OTHER SUBSAMPLES FOR
EACH OF THE OTHER AREAS YOU WANT
TESTED AND FILL THE OTHER
TWO BAGS.



When filling the SoilCares bag,
make sure you put more than
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Kg of soil. It should weigh no
more than 1 Kg - the same as a
bag of flour.



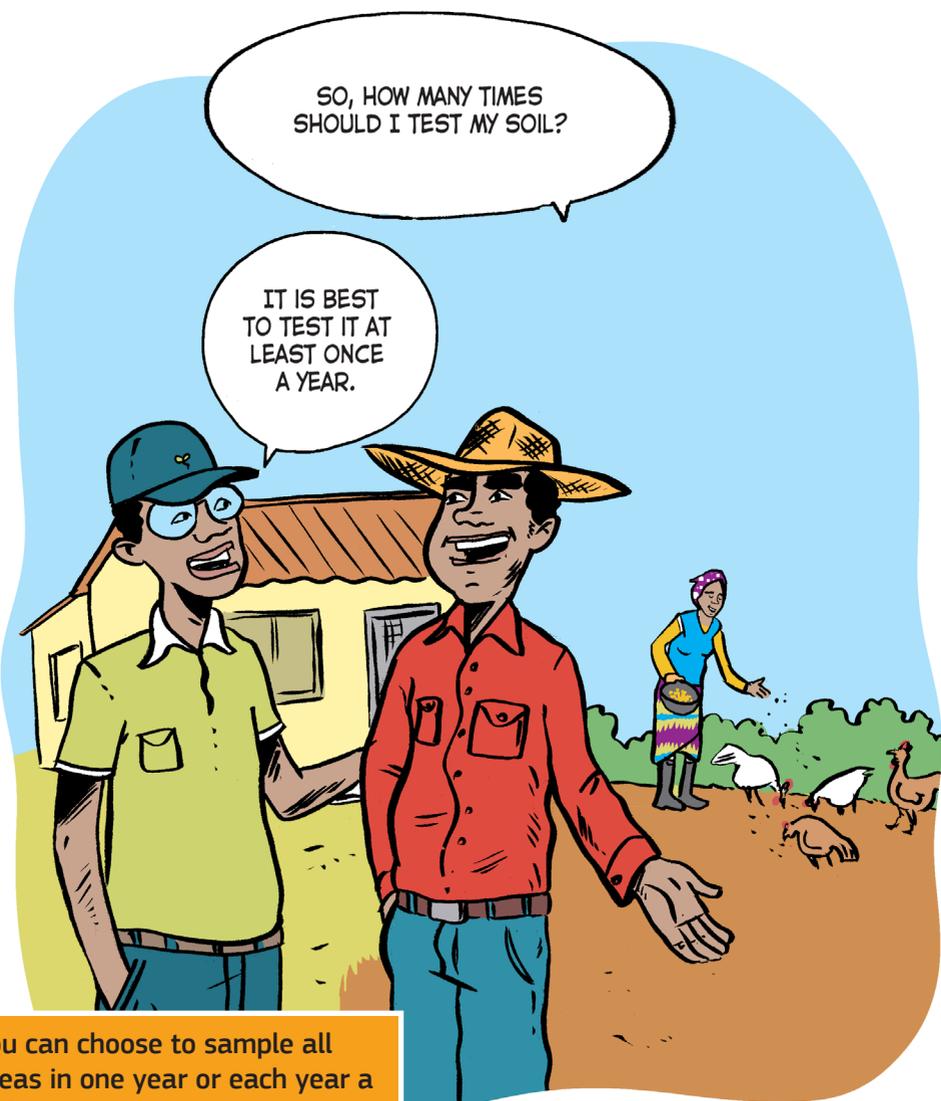
NOW CLOSE THE
3 DIFFERENT BAGS
FROM THE 2 DIFFERENT
FIELDS AND WRITE THE
CROP, THE SIZE OF YOUR
FIELD IN ACRES, YOUR
LOCATION, YOUR NAME
AND PHONE NUMBER
ON THE BAG.

YES, AND WHEN
I AM DONE I AM
READY TO GIVE MY
SAMPLES TO
SOILCARES



Never forget to fill in all your information on the bag. Without it SoilCares cannot send you the results.





SO, HOW MANY TIMES
SHOULD I TEST MY SOIL?

IT IS BEST
TO TEST IT AT
LEAST ONCE
A YEAR.

You can choose to sample all areas in one year or each year a different area, but the best option is to test each area before planting.



Colophon

Want to know more?
info@soilcaresfoundation.com

Editor

Lotte-Marie Brouwer

Writing and preparation

Lotte-Marie Brouwer, Roselyne
Muchichu, Anja Weber

Design

Robbert Kamphuis

Illustrations

Angel Mosquito

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Last edited: December 2018

This booklet is part of the Soil Testing Series of SoilCares Foundation. It explains how you can collect a good soil sample so you can get an accurate result from you soil test.

Through these training booklets SoilCares Foundation wants to show you how to take care of your soil – so the soil can take care of you.

Other SoilCares Foundation booklets:

1. Why should I test my soil?
2. How do I collect a good soil sample?
3. What do the recommendations of the soil test report mean?
4. How and why should I apply fertilizer?
5. What are the differences between mineral fertilizers?

SoilCares 
Foundation

Nieuwe Kanaal 7C, 6709 PA
Wageningen, The Netherlands
www.soilcaresfoundation.com

 **agrocares**
nutrient intelligence

Cara House, Karen Road
Nairobi, Kenya
www.agrocares.com