

THE IMPORTANCE OF **SOIL pH**

If your lawn is not performing very well or not responding to fertiliser then the culprit might just be the soil's pH level. Basically the pH level is a measure of acidity and alkalinity and gives an indication of what your soil needs in order for your lawn to be healthy.



Source a pH soil testing kit from your local nursery, hardware store or lawn care supplier and simply follow the instructions.

The results of the test in conjunction with the included instructions will help you to make the necessary changes for optimum soil growing conditions. If you are still unsure of what needs to be done just take your pH results to your local supplier for advice on how to proceed.

A pH soil test kit will give a reading of between 1 and 14:

- 1 means that your soil is highly acidic.
- 7 means neutral.
- 14 is highly alkaline.

For the long-term health of your lawn your soil's pH level should be between 6 and 6.5. Too far at either end of the scale means that your lawn is out of balance and may soon be struggling. Soil that is too acidic or too alkaline will have problems providing the optimum amount of nutrients needed for healthy growth of your lawn plants.

This pH level measure will assist you in determining the type of fertiliser or additives to apply. The amount of lawn additives to apply will also be determined by the type of soil underneath your lawn.

If your soil is a sandy loam and you need to raise the soil pH by one unit measurement then you will need to add the equivalent of 150 grams of liming material per square metre. For heavy clay soils needing the pH level to raise by one unit you will need to apply 250 grams per square metre of the same product. If you are unsure just take a soil sample with you and ask the experts for advice.

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With a reading below 5.5 the lawn is lacking magnesium and requires an application of garden lime or dolomite (remember to water it in well so it mixes with the soil). This will aid in reducing the acidity of your soil. Mix 50:50 lime and dolomite to receive the right balance of calcium and magnesium. Dolomite is only available in one grade and will cost you around \$8 per bag. Also around \$8 a bag, a super fine grade of lime works the fastest to get the pH levels aligned to within the optimal levels.

If your level is over 7 then you are well advised to apply sulphate of ammonia also known as Agricultural Sulfur to bring back the pH level to within a healthy range.

Once you get the soil pH levels sorted your lawn plants will flourish since they then have the nutrients and optimum growing conditions for their health. Lawns such as Sir Walter have been grown to repair themselves and as long as you ensure the right soil conditions they will bounce back in no time at all. A simple pH test and you'll be on your way to the best soil for getting your lawn lush and green to be enjoyed all year long.

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