

Issue 9 – October 15, 2025

Fruit Crop Report



Weekly Provincial Overview

Harvesting of late season apple and crabapple cultivars is near completion (i.e. Kerr, see photo top corner), with average to above average yields. Good markets exist, for fresh apple sales, at farmers markets and wholesale to local cider companies. Tillage is on-going in new and established strawberry fields to control fall weed flushes. Growers that typically soil sample in the fall, will be sampling fields and orchards once fields dry up somewhat after recent heavy rains in most regions.

Timely Topics - Soil Sampling

Why & When to Soil Sample

Soil testing helps growers assess whether a field is suitable for fruit crops and supports informed decisions for managing fertility throughout the season. Fertilizer rates should be based on sound data derived from soil testing, as estimated nutrient levels are insufficient to maximize yields. Strawberry and raspberry fields should be soil tested annually to match the yearly fertilizer requirements of the plants. Fruit tree orchards can be tested less frequently (every other year). Spring or fall are good times for sampling. Fall soil testing is useful, if fertilizing before freeze-up. Sample at the same time each year for consistent comparisons.

Tools

- Soil corer (push probe/soil auger) or spade shovel.
- Clean bucket(s).
- New plastic bags or sample containers (off the shelf or supplied by the lab).
- Labels and marker to identify the sample before or after it is collected and to make notes.
- Record sheet or sample information labels to record sample details such as site and depth. Format and type of information needed is often listed in each lab's guidelines.

Collection Procedures

Remove any organic matter from the surface before using probe. Mix samples together in a clean pail. If using a hand probe, mark the target soil core depth on the soil probe clearly. Ship as soon as possible to a lab, or store in cool space or freeze, to slow down/stop soil microbial activity (may cause higher N levels in sample than actual field N). Be sure the soil sample submission information sent to the laboratory (online or paper) matches the actual soil sample depth obtained in the field. Sample at the same time every year (fall is ideal) and not on freshly tilled ground if in a new unplanted field. If tilled, then sample on truck/tractor tire tracks. Follow soil testing

company checklist procedures. If part of the field has different soil type or topography, sample those areas separately.

Which Soil Testing Nutrient Package to Choose

For new fruit crop fields choose the full spectrum package, including macronutrients (N,P,K,S), base cations (Ca, Mg, Na), micronutrients (B, Cu, Cl, Fe, Mn, Zn) and soil properties (soil pH, soluble salts, organic matter, carbonates, CEC, base saturation). For established fields, choose a smaller package including just macronutrients (N,P,K,S). Micronutrients may be selected as well, if deficiencies have been an issue in past soil tests. Strawberry plants are very sensitive to soluble salt levels in the soil so it is useful to track levels over time if it has been flagged as a potential issue in previous soil tests.

References

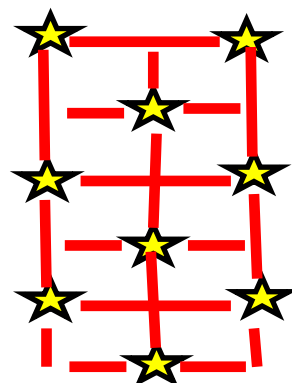
- [Province of Manitoba | agriculture - Strawberry - Fertilizer \(gov.mb.ca\)](http://gov.mb.ca/agriculture/Strawberry/Fertilizer)
- [Province of Manitoba | agriculture - Soil Testing in Manitoba \(gov.mb.ca\)](http://gov.mb.ca/agriculture/Soil%20Testing%20in%20Manitoba)
- [Province of Manitoba | agriculture - Soil Fertility Guide \(gov.mb.ca\)](http://gov.mb.ca/agriculture/Soil%20Fertility%20Guide)
- [Nutrient Management for Fruit & Vegetable Crop Production \(umn.edu\)](http://umn.edu/Nutrient%20Management%20for%20Fruit%20&%20Vegetable%20Crop%20Production)
- Guide to Fruit Crop Production, Manitoba Agriculture, 2007.

Field Sampling Patterns

New Fruit Crop Fields

- Before planting into a new field take soil samples at 0-6" & 6-12" depths.
- Use grid style sampling (Figure 1).
- 15-20 locations sampled per field.

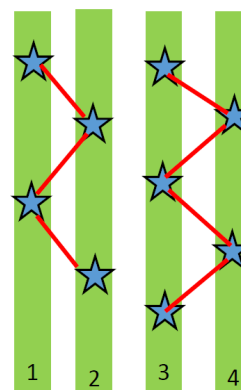
Figure 1: Grid sampling pattern – new fruit crop fields



Established Strawberry Fields- Annually

- June-bearing matted row production system (Figure 2).
- Sample within rows in a random zig-zag pattern.
- Sample 0-6" depth as 90% of strawberry roots are in this zone.
- 15-20 locations sampled per field.

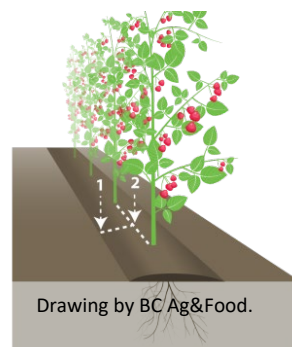
Figure 2: Zig zag pattern - in row - for strawberries



Raspberry Fields

- Annually or every 2 years, sample 0-6" and 6-12" within the row.
- Sample centre of row and edge of row (Figure 3).
- 10-15 locations sampled per field.

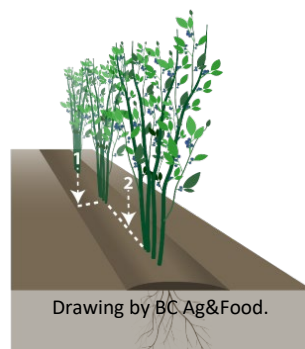
Figure 3: In-row for raspberries



Tree Fruit Hedge Rows, Saskatoons, Haskap, etc.

- Sample every 2-3 years at 0-6" and 6-12" depth within the row.
- Sample centre of row and edge of row (Figure 4).
- 10-15 locations sampled per field.

Figure 4: In-row for tree fruit orchards



Apple Orchards

- Sample every 2-3 years at 0-6" and 6-12" depth within the row.
- Sample at random locations throughout the orchard within the tree's dripline (figure 5).
- 10-15 locations sampled per field.
- Area that is 1/3 distance from the trunk within the dripline should not be sampled as little fertilizer application or uptake occurs in this zone.
- High density trellised apple orchards use hedge row fruit tree sampling pattern.

Figure 5: Within apple tree driplines

