



teacher exercise: **Getting to Know Your Super Soil**

overview

A step-by-step explanation of three, hands-on soil tests.

objectives

Teachers will learn:

- pH test
- soil texture test
- percolation test

resources

- An online review of these tests illustrated by the Colorado State's Cooperative Extension: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/mg/gardennotes/214.html>
- Tips on a successful soil test (when mailing to an extension office) <http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/how-get-accurate-soil-test>

learning activity

1. Understanding your soil's composition, how well it drains, and if it has any nutrient needs is vital to a garden's health.

Use the resource links for a sample step-by-step process every gardener should practice and use:

- **pH test**, either by litmus paper, observation of soil profile or predominant flora (preexisting garden beds only), or with an electronic pH meter.
- **Soil texture test**, which is most easily done either as a squeeze test or jar test.
- **Percolation test**, or drainage test, to see how water drains through your soil.

Optional: Send your soil to a laboratory to be tested.

A soil test by your local land grant university cooperative extension. This will test both macro- and micro-nutrients, as well as toxins such as heavy metals. It is highly recommended when you bring in new soil from unknown sources, as well as after a season or two of gardening when deciding what you should use to amend your garden beds.

