

This protocol will walk you through the steps to successful sampling and shipping.

## IMPORTANT tips for accurate results:

- Take the samples when it is possible to ship them immediately, the same day.
- Shipping should have a target delivery timeframe of **1-2 business days**.
- Wash your hands well or put on clean gloves before handling the sample material, and between handling different samples.
- Keep the samples out of extreme heat or cold as this risks killing the organisms we seek to measure. Aim to keep samples at room temperature or slightly cooler. If shipping during the height of summer heat, a cooler pack may be added to your box with padding so that it is not in direct contact with samples.
- Tools required for sampling: unused large zipper-type plastic bags or a clean container, a shovel and/or soil core, a permanent marker.
- Please ensure to place samples in a box or padded bag where they will not be compacted along the way.

## Sampling Step-by-Step

### 1. Identify the sample area(s).

There may be multiple samples to take if there are several different conditions on your land, or various areas of interest. Ex: If part of your crop is healthy, and another part is diseased, those would be two separate sample areas. Ex. If you have several compost piles, each pile would be its own individual sample. If conditions within each pile are not homogenous, then you can separate these different areas of one pile into two different samples.

*Complete the following steps 2-5 for each separate soil sample area, or compost pile.*

### 2. Collect your sample.

#### For Small Compost Piles:

For each compost sample, reach 6-12 inches into your compost pile, or halfway between top and bottom to take one handful of compost. Repeat 3-5 times, taking each teaspoon from different locations in the pile. Place ALL samples in one bag.

#### For Large Compost Piles:

For each compost sample, reach 6-12 inches into your compost pile, or halfway between top and bottom to take one handful of compost. Repeat ~ 20 times, along and or around the pile at random points making sure to take each teaspoon from different locations in the pile. It may be important to separate larger piles into a distinct “samples” that may have different timing and materials. Place ALL 20 samples into one bag.

#### For Soil:

Before taking a soil core, remove any debris or organic matter sitting on top of the soil. Using an apple corer, take soil cores from 5-10 locations within your identified sample area. When making your selection, consider the following:

- If your analysis is related to a particular plant/crop of interest, take soil cores from the root zone of the plant. Plants should be selected at random throughout the sample area. Ex: To test the soil ecology of a corn crop, pull soil cores from areas where the roots of the corn are present.
- If you are sampling soil around trees, take samples from midway between the edge of the canopy and the tree trunk, at the appropriate root zone depth. If the root zone is located in the first 3-4” of soil, start sample from the top of the soil (insert

corer into soil, take soil from the top 1-4".) If the root zone is deeper, insert corer to the appropriate level and take 4" at that level (so if the root zone starts at 4" deep, take a soil core from 4-8" of depth.)

●If testing for the general state of microbial health within a sample area, but with no particular plant of interest in mind, select 5-10 random locations across the area.

### 3. Compile your soil sample.

Compile 5-10 soil cores or 3-5 compost handfuls (or 20 handfuls from larger compost piles) taken from a single sample area into one bag, creating a composite sample. Leave air space in the bag to allow oxygen for soil organisms. The minimum amount of sample material we require is 500g (~2 cups)

### 4. Label.

Once the sample is taken, please write the following information on the outside of the sample bag. **Do not** place a note inside the sample bag as this may affect results:

- A sample number (simply: #1, #2, #3 etc)
- Sample type: compost, soil, or other
- The date and time the sample was taken

### 5. Mail your samples.

Send samples to be delivered in **1-2 business days** to the following address. Please send by courier or U.S Postal Service. Choose "signature not required" delivery.

CVRFS  
17434 Cty Rd. 37  
Altura MN 55910

### 6. Email the tracking number.

Once samples are sent, please email the package tracking number to [regensoil2020@gmail.com](mailto:regensoil2020@gmail.com). This ensures that we will pick up your package upon its arrival.

**You're done! Good job.**