



**Produce Safety**

## Activity 3: Soil Sampling for Lead

In this two-part activity, you will practice taking a soil sample for the purpose of lead testing, review the results, and discuss impacts on farmworker and consumer safety.

### KEY WORDS

**Lead:** A naturally occurring element that is found in small amounts in the earth's crust and can also be found in amounts that are hazardous to human health in some soils, especially those in urban areas that may have been contaminated by paint and gas made before 1975.



### SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Shovel
- Clean plastic bucket
- Measuring cup or jar
- Clean plastic bag
- Label for bag (if not preprinted)
- Marker for labeling the bag

#### Alternate Supplies

- Soil auger or corer may be used instead of shovel





## How Do You Do This?

### Part 1 - Taking the Sample

1. Using the shovel, soil auger or corer, take 8 to 12 samples from different areas of the farm or garden. If soil has not yet been disturbed, you would take the sample from the first 1 to 2 inches of soil. However, for a site that already has beds established, you'll want to take the samples from 6 inches.
2. Mix all the samples together in the bucket.
3. Measure out about a cup of the mixture to send to the lab.
4. Let this cup of soil air dry and then place it in a clear plastic bag with a label.

### Part 2 - Reviewing the Results

1. Review and discuss the soil test results as a group.
2. Talk about options (e.g., installing raised beds and bringing clean soil into the site) for starting or continuing to farm on a site that tests positive for lead.

## What Does it Mean for My Farm?

- Do you think your farm may be at risk for lead contamination? Why or why not?
- If you found lead on your farm, how would you address it?

### RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL LEARNING

- Keep Growing Detroit [Soil Testing Guide](#)
- D-Town [Farm How to Make A Raised Garden Bed](#) video

