

August

Turnaround time is optimal for soil samples submitted in August.

The Agronomic Division's soil testing lab is processing samples quickly now but will be increasingly busy toward the end of the year. Homeowners, landscapers, golf course superintendents and others with flexible schedules are urged to submit samples before the lab's fall busy season. If cool-season lawn grasses and pastures need to be reseeded, sampling now will make it possible to apply lime well in advance of September or October planting.

Get rapid identification of plant-parasitic nematode species with new test.

The Agronomic Division's Nematode Assay Section offers a new test that identifies plant-parasitic nematodes based on analysis of molecular DNA. The test costs \$10 per sample (instead of \$3), but results are available within a couple of days (instead of weeks), and reports can identify nematodes accurately to species. This is particularly useful information for growers who depend on resistant cultivars and/or crop rotation to suppress nematode populations. For more information on this test and how to sample, contact Dr. Weimin Ye at 919-733-2655 or via e-mail at weimin.ye@ncagr.gov.

Tissue test now to plan for blackberry fertilization next season.

Collect a plant tissue sample about 10–14 days after harvest. Each sample should include 25–30 most recent mature leaves from the primocane. Sampling the floricanes is not recommended unless it is specifically to diagnose a problem. If you have different varieties, submit separate samples for each one. Now is also an appropriate time to submit a corresponding soil sample.

Focus on strawberry fertility.

Take soil samples and apply any recommended lime as soon as possible. Generally, strawberries need 100–120 lb of nitrogen per acre per season. Prior to building the beds and laying plastic, apply 30–60 lb of nitrogen along with any phosphorus or potassium recommended on the soil report. Even when soils are high in phosphorus, an additional application of 30 lb can be beneficial for root growth in the fall. Other nutrients that may have a beneficial effect at this time are sulfur and boron (1 lb/acre).

Continue to use tissue analysis to optimize timing of flue-cured tobacco harvest.

Collect tissue samples five to ten days before each anticipated leaf harvest to determine ripeness. An appropriate sample consists of 10 to 12 leaves from the appropriate stalk position.