

LEAF TESTING:

Why test a leaf?

The aim of the leaf analysis is to relate the nutritional content of the plant to the physical appearance, growth rate, yield and quality of the product. Leaf analysis provides the nutritional status of a crop and can be used to identify nutrient imbalances, deficiencies and toxicities. It integrates all the factors influencing nutrient availability and uptake. It shows the required balanced nutrients. Testing of leaves also predicts plant nutrient problems during the growing season and the remedy can be taken without any loss in productivity.

Selection of Sample:

Selection of leaf samples must be taken at the correct time of year because nutrient concentrations within leaves continuously change. As leaves fall, N, P, and K concentrations decrease; Ca increases; and Mg first increases and then decreases resulting in poor nutrition. However, leaf mineral concentrations are relatively stable from four to six months after leaf emergence. Leaf sample should consist of 100 leaves. The clean proper bag should be used for the preservation of leaves. Do not select the sample from the dead and ailing plants and do not select the sample from the damaged part of the leaf by the insects. Immature leaves must be avoided.

Parameters:

The parameters that are necessary for the leaf testing are Nitrate, Nitrogen, Sulphur, Phosphorous, Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium, Sodium, Chloride, Iron, Aluminium, Manganese, Boron, Copper, Zinc, Molydenum, Cobalt, Selenium.