



SOIL ECOLOGY LABORATORY
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Procedure for collecting and posting samples for soil food web analysis

The service consists of a direct microscopy assay of bacteria, fungi, protozoa and nematodes in soils or compost.

Compost sampling

- From small compost batches take a minimum of 5 teaspoon size samples from under the surface (avoid the dry parts and the dry surface material). From a large windrow, take a minimum 20 and mix them all in a plastic bag.
- Fill the bag only half way, leaving air for the microbes to breathe.
- Label the bag on the outside with batch identification and date of sampling. Do not put any pieces of paper inside the bag. This is microbial food.
- Post using a next day service to the address above, and either text or email to notify us of the posting. Include tracking number if available.

Soil sampling

- **For an arable field:** collect a minimum of three cores (they can be the size of an apple corer to save on shipping from an area of interest in that field. If the field has been turned recently, then it's irrelevant how the samples are spaced and collected.
- Mix all cores into one bag, but leave half of the bag filled with air for the microbes to breathe during transport. No paper inside, as it's microbial food.
- Post using a next day service to the address above, and either text or email to notify us of the posting. Include tracking number if available.
- **For a pasture:** choose an area of the field that has the same plant grouping or a weedy patch. Sample 3-5 cores from that patch and put it into one sample bag. When sampling remove thatch from the soil surface and aim half way between the stem of the plant and it's drip line. Fill the bag only half way to provide air for microbes to breath during transport.
- Mark the bag on the outside with location and date of sampling. No paper inside, as it's microbial food.
- Post using a next day service to the address above, and either text or email to notify us of the posting. Include tracking number if available.

Cost and turnaround

- The service costs £55+VAT per sample, and we aim to provide the report the day after receiving the samples.
- Standard 30 day payment terms included