

# BACKYARD SOIL HEALTH INDICATORS

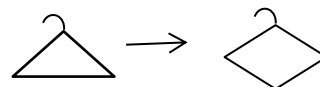
(adapted from Northern Rivers Soil Health Card-Vegetables)

Online reference for original materials: <http://www.soilcare.org/uploads/2/9/1/9/29197227/vegetables-nr-soil-health-card.pdf>  
 Or "Google" Northern Rivers Soil Health Card-Vegetables

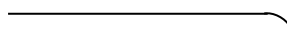
Below are 10 tests you can do in your own garden with simple homemade tools.

You will need to build:

- 1) Wire quadrant- Take a metal clothes hanger and bend into square.



- 2) Penetrometer- Use 10 gauge wire to make a straight rod about 3 ft long, bend one end to make a handle. Mark 1 inch segments on opposite end.



- 3) Infiltrometer Ring- Use 6" diameter PVC cut to 4 inches long. Bevel one end to make it easier to push into ground.

Sampling notes:

- ❖ Test in autumn, several days after a good rain. Test yearly, at the same time each year. These results will show general long term trends in soil health.
- ❖ Test what you consider the "best" area and the "worst" area to get a feel for the range of results. Only compare yearly results for test taken in the same location.
- ❖ Record results in the sample Soil Health Card.

SOIL HEALTH CARD RESULTS									
DATE:		LOCATION:						SOIL MOISTURE: Dry / Moist	
SOIL TYPE:		PRODUCTIVITY:						DAYS SINCE RAIN:	
RESULT →	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	TEST SCORES (1-9)					COMMENTS
TEST ↓	1.....2.....3	4.....5.....6	7.....8.....9	1	2	3	4	5	
1. DIVERSITY OF MACROLIFE	Fewer than 2 types of animals	2 to 5 types of animals	More than 5 types of animals						
2. GROUND COVER (PLANTS/MULCH)	Less than 50% ground cover	50% -75% ground cover	More than 75% ground cover						
3. PENETROMETER	Penetrates to less than 2"	Penetrates between 2" to 6"	Penetrates to more than 6"						
4. INFILTRATION	More than 3 minutes	1 to 3 minutes	Less than 1 minute						
5. ROOT DEVELOPMENT	Few fine roots only to 2"	Some fine roots to 4"	Many fine roots to 8"						
6. STRUCTURE	Mostly clods or surface crust	Some clods, many 1/4" crumbs	Friable, readily breaks into crumbs						
7. AGGREGATE STABILITY	Broke apart in less than 1 min	Remains intact after 1 min	Remains intact after swirling						
8. EARTHWORMS	0 to 1	2 to 3	4 or more						
9. SOIL Ph	5.5 or lower	5.5 to 6	6.1 to 7.2						
10. LEAF COLOR	Stunted plants, leaf discoloration	Some variation in growth and color	Appropriate leaf color and plant growth						