

Guide to Soil Sampling for SCN

When to sample

Soil can be sampled almost any time for the presence of SCN. Fall is often a good time to sample as you plan for the next crop year. Soil samples can be collected throughout the year until a significant snowfall or a hard freeze occurs. Another good time to sample is the spring, however some nematode numbers will be relatively low in spring sampled fields.

How to sample

The equipment you need for sampling soil for SCN is the same equipment you use for taking a soil sample for soil nutrient analysis: a soil probe, a bucket, and a plastic soil bag. Sample the top 6 to 8 inches of soil and take cores from the root zone or between rows. You'll want to take 10 to 20 cores in a 20 acre area. If the field is larger, break the field into 20 acre units and take 10 to 20 cores per unit. If you are already collecting soil samples on a 2 to 4 acre grid pattern, collect extra cores and place them in a separate bag for SCN testing.

The more cores, the better the sample

No matter what sampling pattern you use, the more cores you take, the better the estimate of SCN population density across the field.

You may also want to include samples from a suspect, or high risk areas, such as

- near a field entrance
- areas that have been flooded at one time
- areas of high soil pH (greater than 7)
- areas where weed control isn't quite as good
- areas where the yield seemed to be a little low the last time soybeans were grown
- along fence lines where wind-blown soil accumulates.

Mixing and packing the soil sample

Bulk the cores in a container and mix thoroughly. The better the sample is mixed the better it represents the whole field. Put 1 to 2 pints of the thoroughly-mixed soil in the plastic bag. You'll want to keep the sample at room temperature. Keep the sample out of the sun or hot truck cab until you are ready to pack and ship it.

Where to send the sample

Mail using the enclosed postage paid envelope. Mail as soon as possible and early in the week to avoid delays in transit. Fill out the [Nematode Soil Sample Information Form](#) and enclose it with the sample.

Adapted from the NCSRP Plant Health Initiative

