

# SOILLESS MEDIA SAMPLE INFORMATION

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY  
 REPORT # \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE REC'D \_\_\_\_\_  
 INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_



**SAMPLE TYPE**  
*[circle one / see instructions]*

Predictive (\$5)	Diagnostic (\$5)
Research (\$12)	Out of State (\$25)

NCDA&CS Agronomic Division Plant/Waste/Solution/Media Section  
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SAMPLE INFORMATION		PAYMENT	GROWER INFORMATION <i>(please print)</i>			CONSULTANT/OTHER RECIPIENT		
FARM ID	FEE TOTAL _____ AMT PAID _____	METHOD OF PAYMENT ( ) CASH ( ) CHECK <b>(payable to NCDA&amp;CS)</b> ( ) MONEY ORDER ( ) ESCROW <b>(provide account name below)</b>	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME		LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	
SAMPLED BY <input type="checkbox"/> Grower <input type="checkbox"/> NCDA&CS Agronomist <input type="checkbox"/> Advisor <input type="checkbox"/> Coop. Ext. Agent			ADDRESS			ADDRESS		
SAMPLE DATE			CITY	STATE	ZIP	CITY	STATE	ZIP
COUNTY <i>(where collected)</i>			PHONE (____) ____ - ____			PHONE (____) ____ - ____		
NUMBER OF SAMPLES			E-MAIL ADDRESS <input type="checkbox"/> Do Not notify me when report is available.			E-MAIL ADDRESS <input type="checkbox"/> Do Not notify me when report is available.		

**For each sample, please collect 1-2 quarts of media in a 1-gallon plastic bag.**

LAB NUMBER (leave blank)	SAMPLE ID	MEDIA CODE <sup>1</sup>	MEDIA TYPE <sup>2</sup>	FERT TYPE <sup>3</sup>	SAMPLE TYPE <sup>4</sup>	CROP (scientific or common name)	PLANTING DATE <sup>5</sup>	CORRESPONDING SOLUTION	SAMPLE ID Plant	COMMENTS (fertilizer details, crop appearance)
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										

Key & Codes:	Recommendations can be more specific when this information is provided.	Additional Comments or Information
<sup>1</sup> Media Production System Code	<sup>2</sup> Media Type	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
GHF = GH Floriculture	PMB = Peat Moss Based	
GHV = GH Vegetable	PBB = Pine Bark Based	
NUR = Nursery Crop	PER = Perlite Based	
TOB = Tobacco Transplants	OTH = Other	
OTH = Other	UNK = Unknown	<sup>3</sup> Fertilizer Type
		LIQ = Liquid or Fertigation
		CRF = Controlled Release
		NON = None
		OTH = Other
		UNK = Unknown
		<sup>4</sup> Sample Type
		PRE = Preplant
		POST = Postplant
		<sup>5</sup> Planting date or time since potting (d, wk, mo)

*Thank you for using agronomic services to manage nutrients and safeguard environmental quality. — Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture*

## Rationale for Sampling

Soiless media can be tested preplant (in bulk) or postplant (in container) for predictive or diagnostic purposes. **Predictive (routine)** results are useful in monitoring effectiveness of fertilizer programs. **Diagnostic (problem)** results can help pinpoint suspected nutrient-related causes.

Predictive sampling is a good way to monitor EC, pH and nutrient-level trends and balances. **To obtain meaningful test results that are comparable over time, be consistent in sampling procedure and timing.** Always collect samples at the same time interval after irrigation or fertigation.

Diagnostic sampling involves the collection of multiple samples for comparison. **When trying to diagnose a suspected nutrient problem, collect separate media samples from “good” and “bad” areas.** Collect and submit other types of comparative samples—plant tissue, source water and/or nutrient solution—from “good” and “bad” areas as you see fit.

## Sampling Procedures — refer also to Agronomic Sampling Folder No. 9 available at [www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdf/samsme.pdf](http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdf/samsme.pdf)

A **representative** sample consists of a mixture of 5 to 10 subsamples. Subsamples from dry, bulk substrates should be collected from the center of individual bags or from random areas in a stock pile. In postplant situations, each subsample should

- ▶ be collected from a separate container,
- ▶ represent the same set of conditions (i.e., plant species, stresses, appearance and management practices),
- ▶ NOT be taken from containers that are located on the edges of a bench or block, and
- ▶ NOT be taken from the top or bottom ½ to 1 inch of container media.



To collect subsamples from a small pot,

- ▶ remove the root mass, and
- ▶ pinch or grab a wedge of substrate from the center of the root mass.



To collect subsamples from a large pot,

- ▶ brush aside the top one inch of media, and
- ▶ use a probe or trowel to collect substrate from the center of the pot.

Once subsamples are combined and mixed, the total **sample volume should be at least one quart, but two quarts are preferable.**

**Samples from dry, bulk loads of substrate should be moistened** before being sent to the lab. Moisture will activate lime and provide a more accurate pH reading. Place sample in a sturdy plastic bag, add ⅓ to ½ cup water and knead it in; or place sample in a pot, water until drainage stops and bag as usual.

## Sample Submission

Place each sample in a well-sealed, plastic bag. Using a permanent marker, label it clearly with the sample ID as well as your name and address. Fill out the *Soiless Media Sample Information* form (available online at [www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdf/ad8.pdf](http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdf/ad8.pdf)). Package sample(s), completed sample information form and appropriate fee together. Submit to the Agronomic Division’s Plant/Waste/Solution/Media Section.