

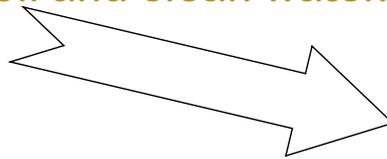
## Activity: Testing Soil Acidity

<http://www.soil-net.com>

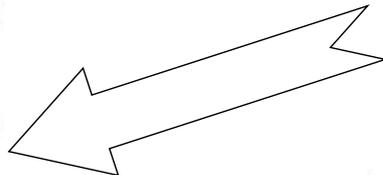


Use an electronic soil acidity meter. Acidity is sometimes called pH - a number between 0 (acid) and 14 (alkaline). Most soil is between pH 5 and 8.

Take some soil and clean water. Mix into a jar



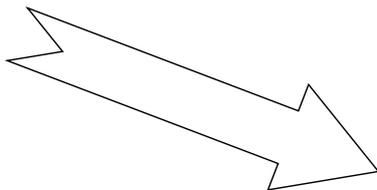
Give it a good stir!



Before use, the probe shaft may need cleaning with the pad provided.

### Take care:

- ❑ Don't place the probe into water without soil
- ❑ Don't scrub the probe tip



Dip the probe into the soil mixture and wait 1 minute, then take a reading.



Write down the pH meter readings.

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Acidity (or pH) is one of the major chemical properties of soil. The acidity directly affects the types of plants that can survive in the soil - acidity affects how plants can take in nutrients from the soil. There is a Soil-Net Case Study on pH and acidity on the website.

This activity is designed to show how portable pH meters can be used to measure acidity. These meters are easily available from gardening or scientific equipment suppliers. We are using an easy-to-use model from **West Meters Ltd.** (see [www.westmeters.co.uk](http://www.westmeters.co.uk)), widely available from good garden centres.

Don't place the probe directly into water or it may be damaged. Clean the probe shaft with the pad provided - not the probe tip though. Take the soil sample from a depth of about 5 to 10cm, removing twigs, debris and stones. Use clean water (preferably neutral deionised water or local rainwater). Deionised water is often sold in garages for use with car batteries. Insert probe and wait 1 minute before taking reading. If the pH is 7 or above, remove and gently wipe probe with tissue, then use the pad to reclean shaft - reinsert in soil for 30 seconds before taking second reading. If the pH is below 7, remove and gently wipe probe with tissue (don't use the pad) - reinsert probe for 1 minute before taking second reading. In either case, the answer is the average of the two readings.

Try soil samples from several locations and compare

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Acidity (or pH) is one of the major chemical properties of soil. The acidity directly affects the types of plants that can survive in the soil - acidity affects how plants can take in nutrients from the soil.

Record your results below. Compare the pH values from soil samples from different locations:

Soil sample	Sample Location	pH result