

Sample Collection Instructions

General Instructions

Take samples the same day you ship them. Otherwise the biological quality of the samples may weaken.

Before shipping, store the samples in a cool place, away from sunlight and the weather.

Package the samples as airily and sturdily as possible into the parcel. The less knocks the samples get during delivery, the better.

If possible, send as an express letter or package, so that it arrives the next day. This way the sample quality holds up. If possible, you may also deliver the samples personally.

Remember to label each sample bag/container with the sample ID and date. Do not put anything other than the sample material in the sample bags.

Remember to include the order form in the package.

Soil Sample

You need: an apple corer, a 0,5 liter Minigrip bag and a waterproof marker

If you wish to assess the soil biology around a specific plant, take samples halfway between the stem and the dripline of the plant. Pull three cores (down to a depth of ~8 cm) of soil from different sides of the plant and place in the same bag. This is one sample.

If you wish to assess a broader area (a field, garden, paddock, etc.), divide the area into zones based on geography, prevailing conditions, the different plants found or plant health. Pull at least three cores from each zone. The aim is to get a representative sample from each zone: if the zone is large, take more than three samples. For smaller zones, three is enough.

Place all the cores from one zone in the same bag and label with the sample ID and date. Label the sample in a way that you will remember later on what it refers to.

NOTE: With every sample be sure to not fill the bag over halfway with the sample material. If you wish to reduce the amount of sample material, combine it all in a sterilized container, mix thoroughly and place a smaller amount in the bag.) Close the bag so that there is air inside the bag. We don't want to remove the air from the bag, as this would reduce the amount of oxygen available to the organisms and might lead to the formation of anaerobic conditions. Also do not put anything apart from the sample material in the bag. All labels are to be placed outside the bag with a waterproof marker.

Pulling a core

You will need a sturdy apple corer, especially if your soil is heavy. Always pull samples when there is moisture in the ground. Clear any debris and mulch from a 5x5cm area. Push the apple corer all the way into the soil. Twist and pull up the core. You should have about 8 cm of material in the corer. Gently shake the material into a Minigrip bag.

Choose an ID for the sample and write that and the date on the outside of the bag with a waterproof marker. Also write it on the order form.

Compost Sample

You will need: a tea spoon, a 0,5 liter Minigrip bag and a waterproof marker

Take one teaspoon (approx. 5 g / 5 ml) of compost from at least five different parts of your compost heap (if it's a small pile) or from up to 20 different spots (if it's a windrow). Take the spoonfuls from different sides and depths of the pile and combine into one Minigrip bag. This will give you a representative sample of the whole compost pile. Label the bag with a sample ID and date, so that you remember later, which sample is in question.

NOTE: With every sample be sure to not fill the bag over halfway with the sample material. If you wish to reduce the amount of sample material, combine it all in a sterilized container, mix thoroughly and place a smaller amount in the bag.) Close the bag so that there is air inside the bag. We don't want to remove the air from the bag, as this would reduce the amount of oxygen available to the organisms and might lead to the formation of anaerobic conditions. Also do not put anything apart from the sample material in the bag. All labels are to be placed outside the bag with a waterproof marker.

Label: all bags should be labeled with the sample ID and date on the outside using a waterproof marker. Do not place any labels in the bag. It will be food for the microbes and may change the biology of the sample.

Liquid Samples

Pour the liquid into a clean, durable 0,1-0,5 liter container, with a twist cap or similar that seals shut tight. Thoroughly wash the container before, if you're not certain that there's only been water in the container.

Fill the container $\frac{1}{3}$ full with the liquid you want assessed. Leave the rest of the space empty. This way there will be enough headspace.

Once the twist cap is tightly shut, cover it with duct tape and place in a large Minigrip bag. Make sure the container is clearly labeled with the sample ID and date on the outside using a waterproof marker.

Shipping Samples

Before shipping be sure to check the appropriate parcel size for the delivery option you choose. At least Posti's express letter has maximum dimensions of 3 x 25 x 35 cm. Use paper or other fill material as needed. Make sure the samples aren't bunched too tight in the parcel. Package the sample bags/containers and the order form and send the parcel as an express delivery, if possible, to the following address:

Uoma Earthcare
Lehmustontie 44
01450 Vantaa

Once I receive the package, I will assess it as soon as possible, write up the report and send that along with the invoice via email.