

Testing of Greenhouse and Garden soils has advanced greatly in the past few years. The reasons are obvious.

- (1) Scarcity of fertilizers; demanding their best use.
- (2) Scarcity of labour; requiring as few applications as possible.
- (3) Higher prices of crops; demanding maximum in production and quality.

Our records of four years tests show that by systematic soil testing one can be reasonably assured of obtaining these much desired results. One just can't tell what is in the soil by looking at it. The reports we have had from many of the larger growers who have used soil testing systematically, definitely bear this out.

We strongly advise the use of one of these simple kits, even for the smallest grower, and have gone to considerable trouble to construct simple, practical and easily handled kits to suit the needs of every grower. These kits give you accurate tests on the soluble plant food in the soil, and what is perhaps even more important, a check on the most harmful soluble salts and alkalis, that are often particularly troublesome in greenhouse soils. The method used with some modifications, is the Spurway or Simplex system of soil fertility analysis.

The application of fertilizer depends upon the need of the particular plant, less the amount already available in the soil. Consistent soil testing is the only logical method to hope to secure this condition.

It is very important that the reagents are properly cared for and are in the proper condition at the time of testing. If any become dark or discolored they should be thrown away and replaced with fresh ones. If kept clean, cool and away from sunlight they will keep for six months or more.

While most of the work in soil testing by florists has been confined to greenhouse crops, the testing of soils for garden crops will soon become even more important. This is particularly true when soils from the field are moved into the greenhouses for crop production. The proper time to prepare such soil is one to three years in advance of use. Soil testing gives an accurate guide as to treatment necessary to bring the field soil up to greenhouse requirements. Testing has shown many of our good garden soils deficient in either potash or phosphorus, or both. It is difficult to explain why the same field with apparently the same soil condition varies so greatly in both soil analysis and crop production. Proper fertilizer applications will usually correct this.

We strongly advise all growers to either test your own soil or have it tested by one of your Agricultural Colleges. There is one thing you must remember, however, that if you are having your soil tested by more than one college or person, you must be careful in comparing the reports on the test to be sure that exactly the same method was used in the analysis. There are today many different systems used and while they are all good they should be thoroughly understood before comparing. This is particularly true if one system is used for field analysis and another is used which was intended principally for rich garden or greenhouse soils.