



Greetings! My name is Dr. James Montgomery, and I am an associate professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Studies at DePaul University. A few years ago, some undergraduate students and I developed a research project called “*What’s In Your Soil?*” The goal of WIYS is to characterize the health and quality of soils in the Chicagoland region. We measure your soil’s pH, organic matter, nitrogen, phosphorus, salt, and total lead content. WIYS provides my students the opportunity to engage with the public and gain laboratory experience conducting soil health analysis.

We would love to assess your soil’s health...for **FREE!** You will receive a detailed report prepared by my students summarizing the health of your soil. .

We use a crowdsource model for collecting soil samples. To participate in WIYS, collect your soil samples following the cartoon on page 2. If you need further instructions on how to collect your soil samples, please view this snappy video produced by ATSDR:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=13&v=GM7-19oSfD8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=13&v=GM7-19oSfD8)

Note: the video mentions the name “Soil Shop”. Soil Shop was developed by the ATSDR (a branch of the CDC) to investigate the lead (Pb) content in soils in community gardens. The WIYS Project is based on the Soil Shop model – only it is better and more comprehensive!

## IMPORTANT

1. Fill a quart-size Ziplock  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with your soil.
2. There is a limit of two soil samples (e.g. 2 Ziplock bags) per street address.
3. Using a Sharpie, write the following on each Ziplock bag:
  - a) The street address where you collected the soil samples.
  - b) The location of your sample (e.g. front yard, side yard, back yard, in-the-ground garden, raised-bed garden, etc)
4. Please fill out the **Site Information** sheet on page 3. Fold the sheet and place it inside the Ziplock bag.
5. If possible, send a photo of your sampling locations in an email attachment to: [jmontgom@depaul.edu](mailto:jmontgom@depaul.edu). Be sure to include the information in 3a-c above in the body of the email.

**6. Mail or bring your samples to: Dr. James Montgomery, Department of Environmental Science and Studies, DePaul University, 1110 West Belden Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614. It will take a minimum of one month to process and analyze your samples.**

# How to Collect a Soil Sample





## Site Information

Please provide the following information:

1. Your name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Home or garden street address: \_\_\_\_\_
3. City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Chicago Community Area (if applicable; e.g. Lincoln Park, Beverly, etc):  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Aldermanic Ward #: \_\_\_\_\_ (if a city of Chicago resident)
6. Telephone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Email: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Sampling Date: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Location of sample #1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of soil (*native, manufactured*<sup>1</sup>): \_\_\_\_\_
10. Location of sample #2: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of soil  
(*native, manufactured*): \_\_\_\_\_
11. Year your home was built? (or the age of your home?): \_\_\_\_\_
12. For community gardens: year your garden was established? \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: there is a limit of two soil samples (e.g. 2 Ziplocks) per address. If you are sampling from multiple addresses, you must fill out the Site Information sheet for each address.**

---

<sup>1</sup> *Native soil* is the soil beneath your feet! *Manufactured soil* is soil or compost you have purchased from a nursery or big box store (i.e. Home Depot) and added to your in-the-ground garden or raised-bed garden.