

Approximate Costs of Soil Health Assessments

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Category	Assessment	How to Test	Cost Range
Chemical (Fertility)	Dark soil color as an indicator of SOM	Visual assessment	Free
	pH	Send samples to a lab, see List of Labs	~\$40-100 per sample depending on which / how many assessments are chosen
	Soil Organic Matter (SOM) (%)		
	Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC)		
	Available Nutrients		
Physical (Structure)	Compaction	Penetrometer	~\$100-400
	Bulk Density	Metal ring, mallet, oven	~\$20 for equipment
	Infiltration Rate	Coffee can & measuring cup	Free
		Infiltrometer	\$200+
	Wet Aggregate Stability	Visual assessment	Free
		Lab analysis	~\$30 per sample
	Water Content	Mass wet vs. oven-dry	Free
		Soil moisture sensor	~\$50+
	Available Water Holding Capacity	Lab analysis	~\$30 per sample
	Biological	Visible biology: arthropods, earthworms, roots	Visual assessment
Microbial biomass		Lab analysis	~\$60-100 per sample
Microbial Community Composition & Fungi:Bacteria ratio		Lab analysis for PLFA	~\$90 per sample

Microbial Respiration	Lab analysis	~\$30 per sample
Enzymes	Lab analysis	~\$25 per sample per enzyme
Nematodes	Lab analysis	~\$40-100 per sample
Active Carbon	Lab analysis for Permanganate Oxidizable Carbon (POXC)	~\$25 per sample
Symphyllans	Potato bait test in April/May	~\$5 for potatoes
Soil-borne pathogens	Lab analysis	~\$40-80 per sample depending on the lab

For a list of lab options, see: https://ucanr.edu/sites/plant_soil_labs_NCal/

For a digital copy of this document or more information about methods, please email Ellie Andrews at eandrews@ucanr.edu

(Information presented here is from commercial labs such as Ward Labs, Dellavalle Labs, etc. Mention of lab names does not constitute an endorsement, simply examples. The cost ranges are approximate and intended as broad estimates to provide ballpark information.)