

It's Nematode Test Time

PINE BLUFF, ARK.

Early autumn when populations are at their highest is the best time to sample for nematodes, says Dr. Henry English, director of the Small Farm Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB). Nematodes are microscopic roundworms that live in the soil and significantly reduce yields on both row and vegetable crops.

"These parasites can be controlled by selecting tolerant or resistant varieties, crop rotation or with chemicals," says Dr. English. Producers should test their soils now to determine if they need to select a resistant variety or use another control method for their next crop.

To sample, use a soil probe and get within 3 to 4 inches of the plant. Angle the probe under the root system and go down 8 to 10 inches. You want to go through part of the fibrous root system but avoid the tap root. Collect a minimum of 20 cores randomly with the probe or another sampling device from the area to be tested. Mix the cores together and submit 1 pint for analysis. A single sample should not represent more

than 20 acres.

Place the sample in a plastic bag immediately after you collect them. Regular freezer bags are best. Keep the samples out of the sun. Exposing the soil sample to excessive heat will kill the nematodes. Instead, putting the soil sample in a cooler without ice is the best way to protect the nematodes until shipping.

Each sample must be accompanied by a completed Nematode Sampling Submission Form, which can be obtained from your local county Extension office. If sending more than one sample per box, place the completed submission forms together on top of the soil samples. Do not stagger them throughout the box.

The Cooperative Extension Service provides a nematode testing service for a nominal fee, beginning at \$10 for an assay for an all plant-parasitic nematodes, through the Arkansas Nematode Diagnostic Laboratory in Hope. Take your sample to your county Extension office, and office personnel will mail your sample to the Nematode Diagnostic Laboratory for you. Δ



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