



LSU AgCenter Home Gardening Certificate Course

Home Lab Activity #

Activity Title: **Testing Your Soil's Drainage**

Materials Needed:

Spade/shovel

Measuring tool

Stick, rod or some other straight edge about 2 feet long

Water

Instructions:

Almost every garden instruction guide refers to the importance of “well-draining soil.” If water drains away from plant roots too quickly, the plants will tend to dry out even if they’re being watered regularly. If water drains too slowly, the roots of many plants will drown and the plant is prone to root rot diseases. A percolation test – or perk test – is a great way to measure drainage in your lawn or garden soil.

1. Dig a hole in the area you are testing about 12 inches deep and 8 to 12 inches wide with a flat bottom and perpendicular (straight) sides.
2. Fill the hole with water and let it sit overnight. This saturates the soil and helps give a more accurate test reading.
3. Refill the hole with water 12 hours later.
4. Lay a stick or something with a straight edge across the hole. Measure the water level from the bottom of the stick to the top of the water and record your readings.
5. Measure the water level every hour.
6. If the water drains 2” every hour, then that is ideal drainage.
7. If the water drains 1”-3” per hour, then you still have pretty good drainage.
8. If the water drains less than 1” per hour, then you have drainage problems that can cause drowning of plant roots and lead to root rot disease.
9. If the drainage is more than 4” per hour, then it is draining too fast and your plants will tend to suffer drought effects often.

Results:

Reminder to post a photo to our optional Facebook discussion board page!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/538153443545779/>