

Home & Garden

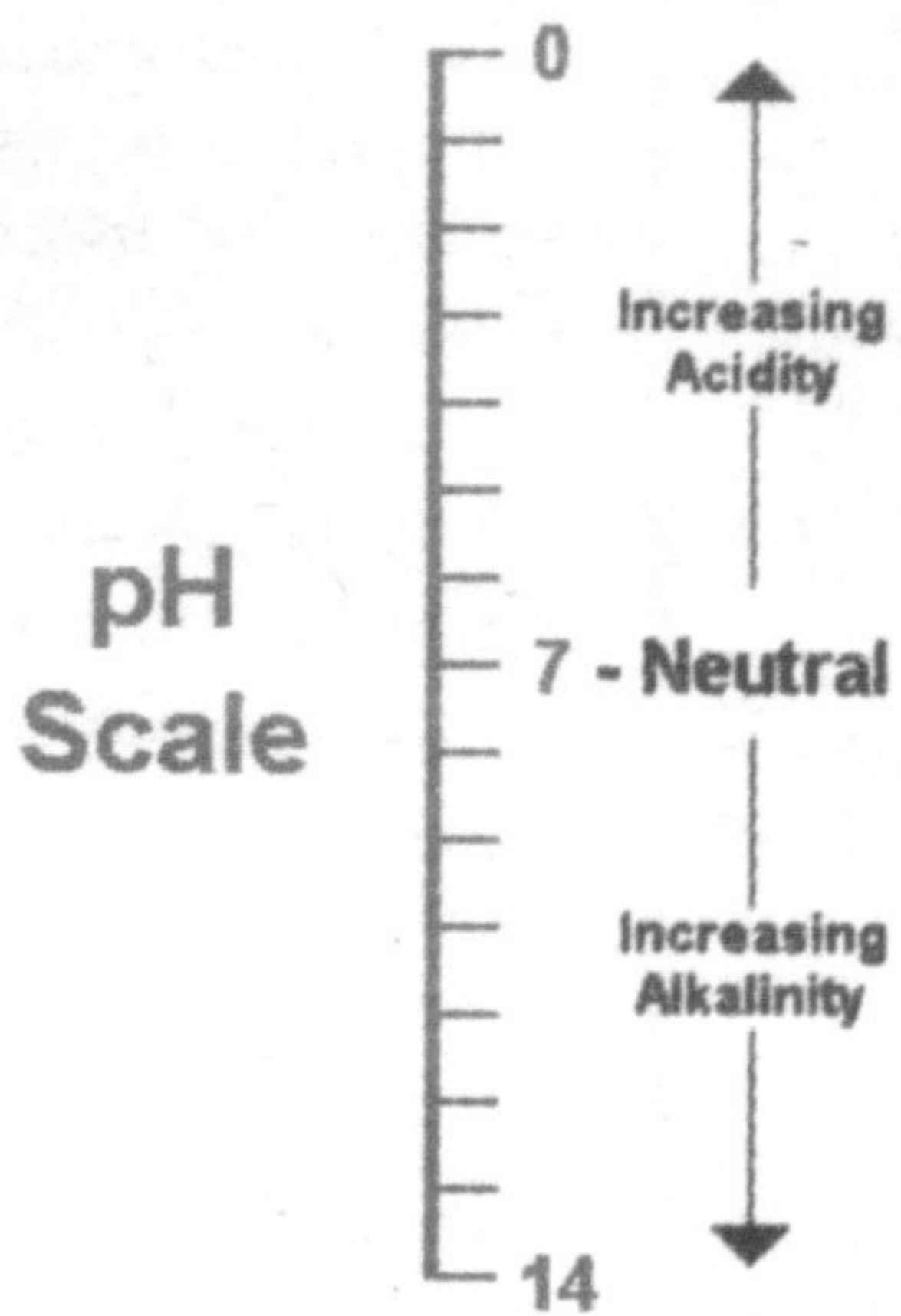
Could your garden pass a soil test?

How well do you know your soil? It's an important question for the health of the plants in and around your house. Good soil does more than provide a foundation for roots to grab on to. Well-structured soil lets the roots breathe easily, provides the right amount of nutrients and water to the plant, and has the right pH balance for the kind of plants you're trying to grow.

Poor soil can inhibit plant growth in a number of ways. If it has too high a clay content, it will compact easily, drain poorly, prevent air from getting to the roots, and dry into hard clumps. If it's too sandy, it will drain too quickly, erode easily and have difficulty holding nutrients for the plants to use. Good soil strikes a balance between these two extremes. When you pick up a handful, it feels moist and loose without falling through your fingers, has a fresh, clean smell, and a rich dark colour.

To find out what your soil structure is like, stir a handful into a clear glass of water and let it sit for several hours, until the water clears. The coarse, heavier sand particles will eventually settle to the bottom, with clay and silt layering the top. Some humus (organic matter) will likely float on top of the clear water. Looking at the side of the glass, you can tell what your soil is primarily made of.

If it's mostly sand, digging in lots of organic matter such as Hillview® Triple Mix® will improve it a great deal. If it's mostly silt and clay, it will benefit from the addition of washed sand to



help it drain and aerate well.

All soils will benefit from liberal applications of compost. If you don't have your own compost, try Green Earth® Premium Compost. Work the soil by turning it over and mixing it well to a depth of at least one foot, before planting.

SOIL pH LEVELS

Acidity or alkalinity in the soil is measured by pH values, on a scale of 1 (most acid) to 14 (most alkaline) with a level of 7 considered "neutral". Each level is ten times more or less than the next, ie. Ph 5 is ten times more acidic than 6 and 100 x more acidic than 7.

The pH level influences the availability of nutrients for you plants, as well as the type of plants you can grow. Most plants will grow well in a pH range of 6.5 to 7.2, where nutrients are readily available to them. But to start, it helps to know what your present soil pH value is. You can buy a simple, inexpensive soil test kit from your garden centre.

Acid soils can be neutralized by adding Green Earth® Dolomitic Lime. Be sure to read the label and change the soil pH slowly and carefully, to ensure you don't upset the balance too far in the opposite direction. Compost will also help neutralize soil pH and add nutrients at the same time.

Alkaline soils can be neutralized by adding Green Earth® Peat Moss, or small amounts of C-I-L® Aluminum Sulphate.

SOIL NUTRIENTS

All plants need a good balance of the major nutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potash), as well as minor or "micro" nutrients such as magnesium, copper, iron, calcium, manganese and many others in minute quantities. You can test your soil for the presence of these nutrients and add those that are needed in the form of fertilizer. They will quickly become available to the plants (providing your soil pH is fairly neutral) and

promote healthy growth. Regardless of pH level, the absence of any key nutrient can cause growth problems. Using a premium quality water-soluble fer-

tilizer like Plant-Prod® All-Purpose Fertilizer 20-20-20 will help to ensure plants get the balanced nutrition they need.

- News Canada

Protection I PLUS I

BRIGGS & STRATTON **PLUS I**

Extends the Life of Your Equipment

EXTEND the LIFE of your Equipment

A Properly Maintained Engine Will

- Reduce fuel consumption up to 30%
- Protect your investment
- Reduce emissions up to 50%

Bring in your equipment for a tune-up or purchase a Briggs & Stratton Maintenance Kit.

Now is the time to give your Outdoor Power Equipment a tune-up! Briggs & Stratton has all the maintenance products you need to extend the life of your engine. Just pick up the Briggs & Stratton Maintenance Kit you need from Halton Power Equipment or let us do it for you. You can be assured your Briggs & Stratton powered equipment will start up easy and run at maximum performance!

"Your Power Source"

HALTON POWER EQUIPMENT
Parts & Repairs For All Small Engines
20 Main St. W. Milton
905-875-3286

www.briggsandstratton.com

HOME, LAWN & Garden

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Decorative Painting

Professional Faux Painting

- Venetian • Textured Plaster
- Color Wash • Linen Look
- Shadow Stripe • Block Effect
- Custom Wall Painting
- Wall Papering

905-854-3846
905-466-1305

Touchwood Contracting

Renovations, Basements and Additions
Kitchens, Bathrooms
Finish Carpentry - trim work
Floors - floating laminate, heated ceramic
Electrical, plumbing
Fire Proofing
Foundation repairs - Waterproofing
Landscaping - Interlocking stone walls, patios
Decks, Sheds, Garages
Vinyl, aluminum siding, soffit
5" seamless eavestrough
Commercial & Residential

For a free consultation and breakdown of a project
905-693-2063
www.twcontracting.ca
References and finished projects available for viewing

Handyman Services

On time. Done right:
"We're Canada's choice for all your household jobs, large or small."

From fixing a broken window to caulking a bathtub, we are your one-stop shop.

MILTON
905-875-0555
www.mrhandyman.com

"No Project is too small for Mr. Handyman"

Irrigation/Landscaping

Mansewood Irrigation and Landscape Lighting Inc.
Certified Irrigation Technicians

- Specialists in design, installation and maintenance of all in-ground irrigation systems.
- Design, installation and maintenance of landscape lighting systems.
- Based in Milton, serving all of Halton.

Call 905-693-2922 for a free estimate

Landscaping

LOOKING GOOD LANDSCAPING

David J. Cook
Tel: **905-330-1330**
Fax: **905-332-1330**

- Interlock
- Patios & Walls & Driveways
- Retaining Walls & Steps
- Ponds & Waterfalls
- Landscape Design
- Armour Stone
- Bobcat Services
- Lawn Maintenance
- Tree Trimming
- and More

MGF
Serving Milton & surrounding area

Home, Lawn & Garden Directory

To book this spot, call Joice at **905-878-2341** Ext. 241

WHO DOES IT ON THE WEB

WHO DOES IT DIRECTORY

Join the Champion Web Site!

for as little as **\$10/month.** Don't delay, call today!

For more information call Joice 905-878-2341