



Soil Contaminant Testing Assistance: Guidelines

In urban areas, soil contamination may be a concern for groups planning to start an in-ground community garden. Knowing the type and level of soil contamination (if any) can help a garden group decide if they can proceed with an in-ground garden, or if they need to construct raised beds with imported soil and landscape fabric beneath.

Each year, Forsyth Community Gardening can provide a limited number of garden groups that meet certain criteria with up to \$150 to offset the cost of soil contaminant testing (for example, heavy metals, PAHs). Please do not be intimidated by the technical issues of determining potential contamination risks – Cooperative Extension staff and their partners are available to help you navigate the process!

To apply, please:

- Review Guidelines #1-3 on the next page to determine if your group is eligible.
- Contact Megan Gregory, Community Gardening Coordinator (gregormm@forsyth.cc, 336-705-8823) for assistance with determining if you need to test for contaminants, what contaminants might be a concern, and identifying a lab.
- Download an application (from: <https://tinyurl.com/FCGDocuments>), then complete and return it to Megan via email (gregormm@forsyth.cc) or by mailing or delivering it to 1450 Fairchild Rd., Winston-Salem NC 27105.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and funds are available on a first come, first serve basis to qualifying groups. Funds not used by May 1 of each year may be transferred to other uses, as the Forsyth Community Gardening program must spend allocated funds by the end of each fiscal year (June 30).

For more information on soil contaminant sources and testing, as well as best practices to reduce exposure, please visit: <https://sites.nicholas.duke.edu/superfund/gardens/> and <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/healthysoils.htm>.

Please see the next page for eligibility guidelines.

To qualify for assistance with soil contaminant testing costs, your garden group must:

1. **Be located in Forsyth County.**
2. **Demonstrate readiness to start a community garden**, including having a committed leadership team, plan for building and using the garden, and most of the financial and material resources to build the garden.
3. **Be located in, and/or engaging and benefiting limited resource communities.** Gardens must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - **Be located in a limited resource community and primarily organized by residents of this community.** Limited resource communities are defined as census tracts with more than 20% of the population living in poverty (see: <https://tinyurl.com/ForsythIncomeMap>).
 - OR -
 - **Engage and benefit primarily people of limited resources and under-represented communities.** At least one-half of all gardeners should be of limited resources and/or from under-represented communities (including, but not limited to, racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, people who speak English as a second language, and people with disabilities).
4. **Have formal permission to use the site in question, and, if required, a Special Use Permit.** For details, see: <http://cityofws.org/Departments/Planning/Urban-Agriculture>.
5. **Have identified potential sources of contamination in the site's history.** Extension staff can help with this, and a searchable map of *potential* contaminant sources is at: <https://sites.nicholas.duke.edu/superfund/education-and-outreach/map/>. These include:
 - Current or former industrial sites including: auto repair or filling stations, dry cleaners, or creosote (wood treatment) facilities.
 - Sites where houses built prior to 1978 have been demolished.
 - Located near major roadways.
 - Sites used for landfills, scrapyards, or waste dumping (including junk vehicles).
 - On or near land that has been designated/identified as Superfund sites, hazardous waste sites, underground storage tank sites, or brownfields.
6. **Have determined which contaminants to test for, identified a lab, and obtained a price quote.** Please contact the Community Gardening Coordinator for assistance (gregormm@forsyth.cc or 336-705-8823). For a partial list of laboratories in North Carolina that offer soil contaminant testing, see: <http://tinyurl.com/ForsythGardenResources> (look under "Soil Testing").