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Practical Work

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pH test and amendment

Soil pH testing helps determine whether the soil is acidic, neutral or alkaline. Most plants grow in slightly acidic to neutral soils (pH 6–7). Acidic soil can make it difficult for plants to absorb certain nutrients, while alkaline soils may prevent other nutrients from reaching the plant, leading to deficiencies.

The process of pH testing

Add a little distilled water to the soil sample, making it a paste/slurry.	Dip pH strip/pH metre into the slurry.	Compare strip colour or metre reading with pH scale to identify soil as acidic, neutral or alkaline.

Result	Action to be taken
Soil pH is acidic, i.e., below 6	➤ Adding compost (organic matter) ➤ Adding wood ash ➤ Adding lime or dolomite
Soil pH is basic, i.e., above 8.5	➤ Adding extra water and draining it (soil wash) ➤ Adding compost (organic matter) ➤ Adding gypsum or sulphur containing fertiliser



- Which test did you do?
- What were the results of the test?
- What steps did you take to improve the quality of the soil?