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Sampling

The nutritional status of this vegetable crop is monitored using soil tests and plant analysis. Monitoring regularly is important to help sustain optimum levels and avoid nutritional disorders. If disorders do occur, rapid diagnosis is necessary to assist correction.

Capsicum can be grown under glass or as a field crop. The interpretive data provided here are for glasshouse crops.

Leaf

Sampling Time: At flowering or early fruiting.

Plant Part: Upper youngest mature leaf (blade & petiole).

Collect From: -

Quantity per Sample: 20 - 30 leaves.

Recommended Tests: Basic Plant (BP).

Comments: To help diagnose an obvious problem, leaves showing the first signs of the distinctive symptoms should be collected as soon as abnormalities appear. If sampling outside the normal sampling time it is useful to take a second sample of similar, healthy leaves from nearby unaffected plants for analysis as a comparative standard.



Soil

Sampling Time: Prior to crop establishment.

Core Depth: 15 cm.

Collect From: Randomly throughout the area to be planted.

Quantity per Sample: 12 - 20 cores.

Recommended Tests: Basic Soil (BS).

Comments: If a problem is suspected during the growing season, then a sample should be taken from the rooting zone immediately adjacent to the plant. Collecting a second sample from an unaffected area may help identify the cause of the problem.

Interpretation

Interpretation of the laboratory's results is possible by comparison with normal levels expected for the crop in question. The interpretation given here are based on the best information available and relate specifically to the sampling instructions given.

Leaf			Soil		
Element	Unit	Normal Range	Element	Unit	Normal Range
Nitrogen	(%)	3.5 - 5.5	pH	-	5.4 - 6.8
Phosphorus	(%)	0.30 - 0.60	Olsen P	(ug/ml)	50 - 100
Potassium	(%)	4.0 - 5.5	Potassium	(me/100g)	0.70 - 1.40
Sulphur	(%)	0.30 - 1.30	Calcium	(me/100g)	6.0 - 12.0
Calcium	(%)	1.50 - 3.00	Magnesium	(me/100g)	1.00 - 3.00
Magnesium	(%)	0.40 - 0.80	Sodium	(me/100g)	0.00 - 0.50
Sodium	(%)	0.00 - 0.25	CEC	(me/100g)	12.0 - 25.0
Iron	(ug/g)	80 - 200	Volume Weight	(g/ml)	0.60 - 1.00
Manganese	(ug/g)	40 - 200			
Zinc	(ug/g)	30 - 60			
Copper	(ug/g)	6 - 20			
Boron	(ug/g)	30 - 90			

Comments:

Nitrogen levels decline as the season progresses. The critical level of 4% drops to 3% during fruiting.

Calcium deficiency can produce blossom end rot in pepper fruit, as for tomatoes. The problem is exacerbated by high salt levels in the growing media.

Peppers are not as tolerant of high salt levels as tomatoes. Ensure salt levels do not exceed 0.15%.

Results for copper, zinc and manganese in leaves sprayed with fungicides will not be reliable due to adhering spray residues on the leaves.

Iron deficiency symptoms may exist even when leaf levels appear satisfactory. This may be due to the presence of physiologically inactive forms of iron within the tissue. Also, soil contamination of leaves growing near the ground may elevate total iron results.

If the capsicums are grown in the field, the normal levels for nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium will tend to be lower than the levels quoted for glasshouse production.

References

Windsor, G. and Adams, P. 1987. Diagnosis of mineral disorders in plants. Volume 3, Glasshouse crops. MAFF/ARC London.

Weir, R.G. and Cresswell, G.C. 1995. Plant nutrient disorders 3. Vegetable crops. Inkata Press.

Blackmore, L.C; Searle, P.L and Daly, B.K. 1987. Methods for chemical analysis of soils. NZ Soil Bureau Scientific Report 80. NZ Soil Bureau, DSIR.

Disclaimer:

Normal Range levels quotes relate specifically to the sampling procedure given. The Normal Range levels and Comments provided are the most up to date levels available but may be altered without notification. Such alterations are implemented immediately in the laboratory histogram reports. It is recommended that a consultant or crop specialist be involved with interpretations and recommendations.