

How can you measure the pH level in soil?

Red Cabbage Juice

(Blackberries, red onions, or even hibiscus flowers can also be used.)



An excellent way of doing it is to:

1. boil a red cabbage in water
2. strain off the liquid into a separate container.
3. collect soil samples from various parts of your garden and place them in separate glass jars.
4. pour some red cabbage juice into each soil sample to have a thick consistency.
5. Wait for a minute and then look at the colour of the soil:
 - red = high acidity,
 - yellow/orange = lower acidity,
 - green = neutral,
 - blue/purple = alkalinity.

Why is soil pH important?

Soil pH is important because it affects the health of plants. Beneficial minerals such as iron and manganese provide the nutrients or "food" for plants and most plant nutrients dissolve best when the soil is slightly acidic at a pH range of about 6 to 7. However when the soil is **too acidic**, these same minerals become so abundant that they can harm or even kill plants.

What can I do if my soil is too acidic?

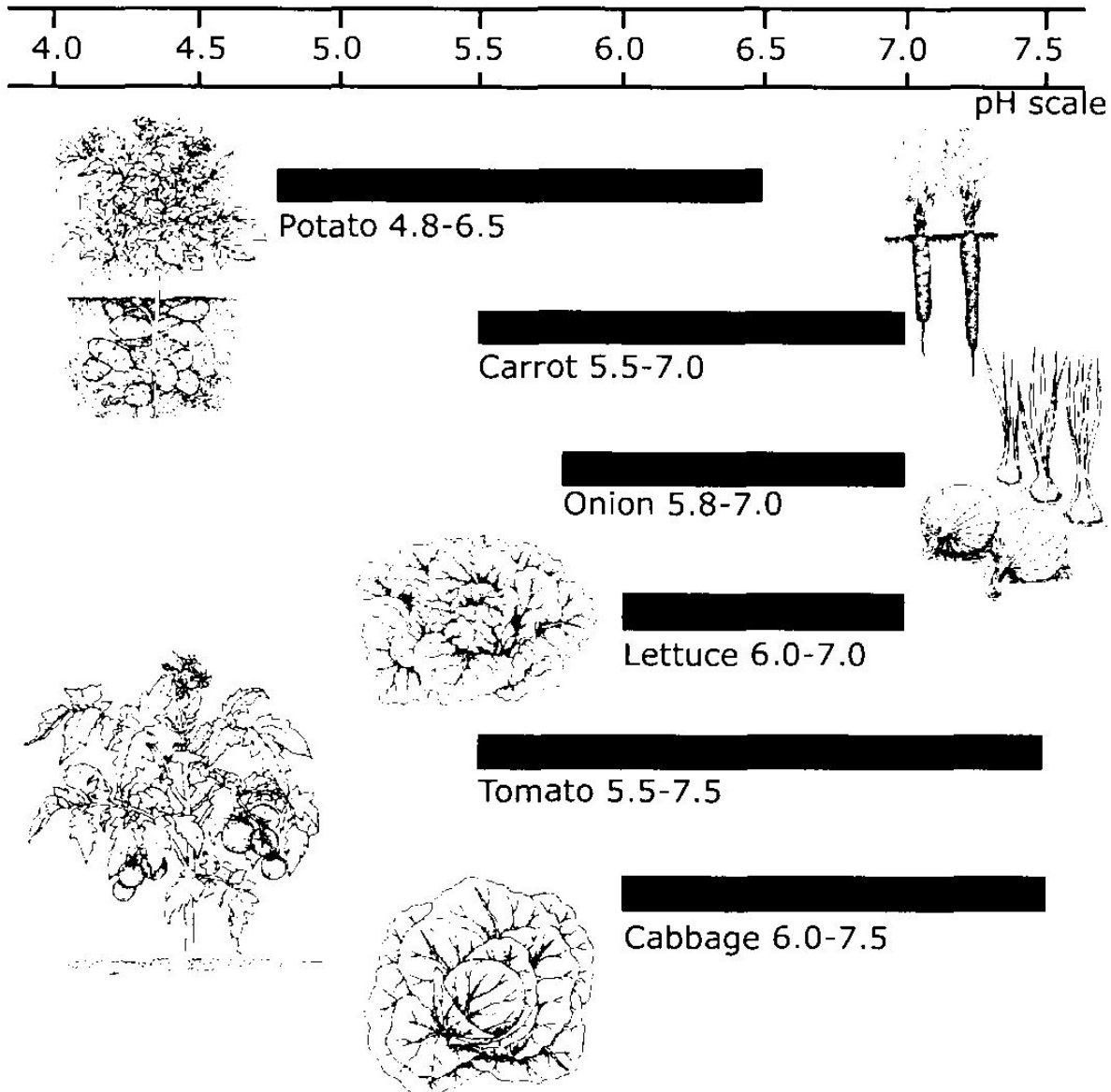
You can add *Mudgee Dolomite*. Mudgee is a town west of Lithgow and it is there that a company makes this product. Dolomite is a term used by geologists to describe rocks containing Carbonates of Calcium and Magnesium.

- Dolomite neutralises soil acidity and is more effective weight for weight than limestone.
- It provides the element Calcium that is essential to maintain plant cell functions.
- It provides Magnesium that is essential for chlorophyll production.
- It stimulates microbacterial activity in the soil to aid plant nutrient availability.
- And lastly, dolomite helps to ensure the breakdown of organic matter and increases the availability of nitrogen to plants.

WHY IS SOIL pH IMPORTANT?

Soil pH is important because it affects the health of plants. Before a nutrient can be used by plants, it must be dissolved in soil water. Most plant nutrients dissolve when the soil is slightly acidic. Many plants do well at a pH range of about 6 to 7.

Soil pH levels for best growth of common vegetables



When soil is acidic, minerals, such as iron and manganese, dissolve in soil water. In small quantities, these minerals help plants to grow. However, when the soil is too acidic, these minerals become so abundant that they can harm, or even kill, plants.