



## **USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference**

### [Nutrients in Agricultural versus Urban Soils](#)

Some research suggests that urban areas where gardens, lawns, shrubs are heavily fertilized may contribute significantly to nutrient loading in surface and groundwaters. Soil test summaries from 6 public soil testing laboratories in the southern region revealed that the percentage of urban-type samples tested do not appear to be increasing and may even be decreasing over the entire region. Trends vary from one state to another but the overall trend based upon soil test P levels does NOT seem to suggest that urban garden soils are building P any faster than agricultural soils. In fact, urban type samples tend to test either very low or very high in nutrients whereas agricultural samples are more moderate. Exceptions are the western states of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas where between 60 and 70% of all urban samples tested High or Very High in P compared to 15 to 30 percent of agricultural samples. Trends in soil test K are similar in urban and agricultural samples. Patterns of fertilizer sales do not seem to be related to soil test patterns.

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