How to collect a soil sample for biological assessment:

1. Wash your hands or put on some clean gloves
The last thing we need is Cheeto fingers or the like influencing the biology of the sample

2. Gently remove any mulch, leaf litter, or grass covering the surface of the soil. To evaluate biology in the root zone of a particular plant, select an area halfway between the stem and dripline. *It doesn't have to be perfect, just try to keep larger materials out of the sample as much as possible*

3. Using an apple corer, or a similar tool, collect a core sample within the top 3-4 inches by pushing it into the soil, giving it a little twist, and pulling it up and out of the earth

4. Place the core sample into a clean plastic Ziploc-type bag or glass jar.
Do not use *paper bags, this will unfortunately compromise the results*

5. Randomly choose 3-4 more locations within your sample area and collect additional core samples. Place each one in the same bag together. Select a new bag or jar for each sample area.
We want to be random to avoid bias. Aim for 4-5 core samples per sample area.

6. Gently mix the sample
Just rock the sample back and forth a bit, we're aiming for a homogenous mix of the individual core samples. Do not crush up any aggregates.

7. Do <u>not</u> press the air out of the bag or fill the jar all the way; if possible leave a small opening along the seal line for some air exchange. *Be goldilocks about it, not too much that lots of soil spills out in transit*

8. Using a permanent marker, write directly on the outside of the bag or jar with your name or that of your business and a sample name of your choosing *e.g. "Cooper Farms - south field"*

Important Tip:
It's best practice to collect soil samples when the soil is moist! This may mean you need to schedule an irrigation event prior to sampling.

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