

Healthy Soil & clean water =
Healthy Crops & Pasture =
Healthy Livestock & People



Soil Health:

- ▶ Structure
- ▶ Nutrients
- ▶ Biology

SWEP recommendation needs to be applied according to the area of the garden. This is not difficult, but there are some common mistakes to avoid.

Let's suppose you wanted to lay out a vegetable garden in your backyard and thought 10 square metres would be a good start. You get out a measuring tape and some pegs and duly mark out an area 10 metres long by 10 metres wide. Pretty straightforward – Yes?

Unfortunately, like so many of us, you have just forgotten the difference between square metres and metres squared! An area of 10 metres by one metre would be 10 square metres. The area marked out above is actually $10 \times 10 = 100$ square metres (but 10 metres squared).

Clearly this can make a significant difference to the results you get in improving your soil.

Suppose you needed 100 grams of Lime per square metre. An area of 10 square metres would require one kilogram of Lime. However, if you applied this to the 10×10 area, it would clearly not be enough to do the job. In this case you would actually have needed to use 100 grams or 10 kilograms of Lime.

Guessing the area of the garden is even more unreliable. The average home garden is between 300 and 700 square metres, but most people (if asked to guess) would underestimate the area. Ideally, you should draw up a scale plan of the garden and work out the area from that, but there are a few shortcuts you can use in most circumstances.

Odd shaped beds

The trick with odd-shaped garden beds (especially those with curved edges) is to treat them as a series of rectangles and triangles joined together. You can easily work out the area of each section and then just add them all together. In fact, the more pieces you divide the bed into, the less the result is likely to be affected by the curvature of the edge.

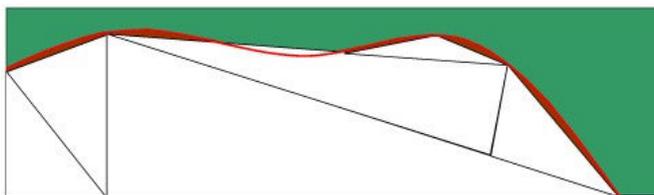


Figure 1. Sectioning this odd-shaped garden bed into a series of triangles can give a good approximate area by adding together the areas of the individual triangles.

Area under trees

Here it is important to understand where the feeder roots are. Most of them will be in the area just beneath the outermost foliage. Measure the distance from the trunk to the start and finish of the area you will be

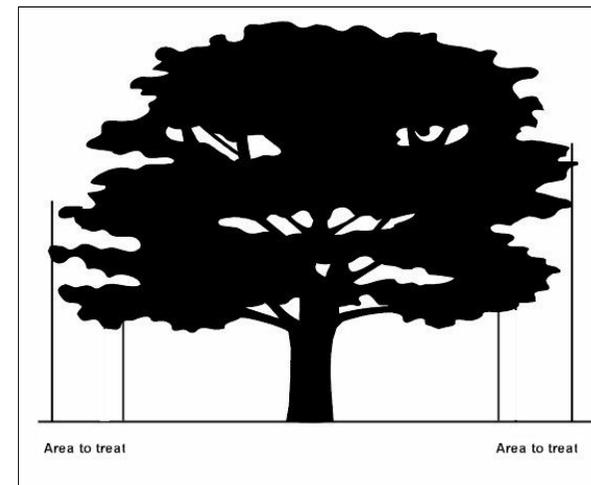


Figure 2. The main concentration of feeder roots is within the drip-zone and this is the main area to treat.

treating. These will be the radii of two circles and the difference in the area of these circles will be the area to treat.

Soil Depth

All SWEP recommendations take the depth of the sample into account. This makes getting this right fairly important as you cannot simply adjust the recommendations afterwards. The best depth to use for gardens is from the surface to a depth of 15cm (0-15cm). You should read our information on Collecting Samples for more details on this.

If you need more help with anything here, please email us at services@swep.com.au