

What is Soil pH

Soil pH indicates acidity, alkalinity or neutrality of the soil. This is expressed in a values ranging from 1 to 14. Soils having pH values between 1 and 7 are acidic and 7 to 14 basic or or alkaline. A pH of 7 indicates that the soil is chemically neutral. However it should be understood that soil pH is only a measure of intensity of acidity and not of the amount of acid present in the soil.

The favourable pH range for coconut growing soils in Sri Lanka is 5 to 8. Soils having pH of less than 4 are more acidic and grater than 8 are too alkaline. More acidic soils release iron, manganese, zinc and copper upto toxic levels for coconut. Nitrifying bacteria which function to provide nitrogen for plant growth are also deactivated or inhibited by acidity. Highly alkaline soils may induce minor element deficiencies which may suppress plant growth.

pH of the acidic soils can be increased by jiming the soil using ground lime stone. The lime requirement should be estimated by pH soil tests. pH of highly alkaline soils can be reduced by adding organic matter such as plant residues or powdered sulphur to the soil.

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