

# How To Test Soil Drainage



- Properly draining soil is important when determining whether a site is appropriate for planting trees and/or climate-appropriate plants.
- Use the following as a guide to determine if the soil will drain properly.

## You'll need the following:

- Shovel
- Watch
- Bucket or hose
- Ruler
- Water

## Let's get started

1. Dig a hole in the identified area.
  - One-foot wide and deep.
2. Fill the hole with water and let it completely drain.
3. Fill the hole with water again and note the starting time.
  - How long does it take for the water to completely disappear (5 minutes, 30 minutes, 1 hour)?
  - If draining slowly, how much water drains each 30 minutes (1/2 inch every 30 minutes, etc.)?



## Soil Test Results

### How long did it take for the water to drain?

0 - 4 minutes: Fast-draining soil

- This area is fine for trees/plants.

5 - 15 minutes: Good draining soil

- This is an ideal area for trees/plants.

16 - 60 minutes

- If soil is draining at least 1 inch per hour, the area is fine for some trees/plants.
- This is not a good area for trees/plants that need well-drained soil

More than 6 hours

- This is not a good area for most trees, and some native plants.
- Choose trees and plants that normally grow along streams.



Tel: (818) 753-4600 | Fax: (818) 753-4625  
[www.treepeople.org](http://www.treepeople.org)