

A pH of 6.5 is just about right for most home gardens, since most plants thrive in the 6.0 to 7.0 (slightly acidic to neutral) range. Some plants (blueberries, azaleas) prefer more strongly acidic soil, while a few (ferns, asparagus) do best in soil that is neutral to slightly alkaline. Acidic (sour) soil is counteracted by applying finely ground limestone, and alkaline (sweet) soil is treated with gypsum (calcium sulfate) or ground sulfur.

How to find out your soil pH? You can get a soil test—which is free or available for a small fee from your local cooperative extension. Here's another way to figure out your soil type.

Once you figure out your soil pH, you can change or adjust it. The level of acidity will specify the amount of lime or sulfur that is needed to bring it up or down to the appropriate level.

The soils in West Henrico tend to be acidic (5.0 to 5.5) if they haven't been treated and need lime to grow plants that like higher PH.

Fortunately, lawn and turf grasses will grow over a wide range of soil acidity and alkalinity, although the moderately acid soils varying from soil pH 6.0 to 6.5 probably are best. If the acidity is more intense than pH 6, lime will be needed. Soils can be too alkaline for grass but this is rare.

#### SOIL PH LEVELS FOR PLANTS

Trees and Shrubs	Optimum pH Range
Apple	5.0-6.5
Ash	6.0-7.5
Azalea	4.5-6.0
Basswood	6.0-7.5
Beautybush	6.0-7.5
Birch	5.0-6.5
Blackberry	5.0-6.0
Blueberry	4.0-6.0
Boxwood	6.0-7.5
Cherry, sour	6.0-7.0
Chestnut	5.0-6.5
Crab apple	6.0-7.5
Dogwood	5.0-7.0
Elder, box	6.0-8.0
Fir, balsam	5.0-6.0
Fir, Douglas	6.0-7.0

Hemlock	5.0-6.0
Hydrangea, blue-flowered	4.0-5.0
Hydrangea, pink-flowered	6.0-7.0
Juniper	5.0-6.0
Laurel, mountain	4.5-6.0
Lemon	6.0-7.5
Lilac	6.0-7.5
Maple, sugar	6.0-7.5
Oak, white	5.0-6.5
Orange	6.0-7.5
Peach	6.0-7.0
Pear	6.0-7.5
Pecan	6.4-8.0
Pine, red	5.0-6.0
Pine, white	4.5-6.0
Plum	6.0-8.0
Raspberry, red	5.5-7.0
Rhododendron	4.5-6.0
Spruce	5.0-6.0
Walnut, black	6.0-8.0
Willow	6.0-8.0
<b>Vegetables</b>	
Asparagus	6.0-8.0
Bean, pole	6.0-7.5
Beet	6.0-7.5
Broccoli	6.0-7.0
Brussels sprout	6.0-7.5
Cabbage	6.0-7.0
Carrot	5.5-7.0
Cauliflower	5.5-7.5
Celery	5.8-7.0
Chive	6.0-7.0

Cucumber	5.5-7.0
Garlic	5.5-8.0
Kale	6.0-7.5
Lettuce	6.0-7.0
Pea, sweet	6.0-7.5
Pepper, sweet	5.5-7.0
Potato	4.8-6.5
Pumpkin	5.5-7.5
Radish	6.0-7.0
Spinach	6.0-7.5
Squash, crookneck	6.0-7.5
Squash, Hubbard	5.5-7.0
Tomato	5.5-7.5
<b>Flowers</b>	
Alyssum	6.0-7.5
Aster, New England	6.0-8.0
Baby's breath	6.0-7.0
Bachelor's button	6.0-7.5
Bee balm	6.0-7.5
Begonia	5.5-7.0
Black-eyed Susan	5.5-7.0
Bleeding heart	6.0-7.5
Canna	6.0-8.0
Carnation	6.0-7.0
Chrysanthemum	6.0-7.5
Clematis	5.5-7.0
Coleus	6.0-7.0
Coneflower, purple	5.0-7.5
Cosmos	5.0-8.0
Crocus	6.0-8.0
Daffodil	6.0-6.5
Dahlia	6.0-7.5

Daisy, Shasta	6.0-8.0
Daylily	6.0-8.0
Delphinium	6.0-7.5
Foxglove	6.0-7.5
Geranium	6.0-8.0
Gladiolus	5.0-7.0
Hibiscus	6.0-8.0
Hollyhock	6.0-8.0
Hyacinth	6.5-7.5
Iris, blue flag	5.0-7.5
Lily-of-the-valley	4.5-6.0
Lupine	5.0-6.5
Marigold	5.5-7.5
Morning glory	6.0-7.5
Narcissus, trumpet	5.5-6.5
Nasturtium	5.5-7.5
Pansy	5.5-6.5
Peony	6.0-7.5
Petunia	6.0-7.5
Phlox, summer	6.0-8.0
Poppy, oriental	6.0-7.5
Rose, hybrid tea	5.5-7.0
Rose, rugosa	6.0-7.0
Snapdragon	5.5-7.0
Sunflower	6.0-7.5
Tulip	6.0-7.0
Zinnia	5.5-7.0

To learn more about testing your soil [have it tested!](#)