

## METHOD 9081

### CATION-EXCHANGE CAPACITY OF SOILS (SODIUM ACETATE)

#### 1.0 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

1.1 Method 9081 is applicable to most soils, including calcareous and noncalcareous soils. The method of cation-exchange capacity by summation (Chapman, 1965, p. 900; see Paragraph 10.1) should be employed for distinctly acid soils.

#### 2.0 SUMMARY OF METHOD

2.1 The soil sample is mixed with an excess of sodium acetate solution, resulting in an exchange of the added sodium cations for the matrix cations. Subsequently, the sample is washed with isopropyl alcohol. An ammonium acetate solution is then added, which replaces the adsorbed sodium with ammonium. The concentration of displaced sodium is then determined by atomic absorption, emission spectroscopy, or an equivalent means.

#### 3.0 INTERFERENCES

3.1 Interferences can occur during analysis of the extract for sodium content. Thoroughly investigate the chosen analytical method for potential interferences.

#### 4.0 APPARATUS AND MATERIALS

4.1 Centrifuge tube and stopper: 50-mL, round-bottom, narrow neck.

4.2 Mechanical shaker.

4.3 Volumetric flask: 100-mL.

#### 5.0 REAGENTS

5.1 Sodium acetate (NaOAc), 1.0 N: Dissolve 136 g of  $\text{NaC}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$  in water and dilute it to 1,000 mL. The pH of this solution should be 8.2. If needed, add a few drops of acetic acid or NaOH solution to bring the reaction of the solution to pH 8.2.

5.2 Ammonium acetate ( $\text{NH}_4\text{OAc}$ ), 1 N: Dilute 114 mL of glacial acetic acid (99.5%) with water to a volume of approximately 1 liter. Then add 138 mL of concentrated ammonium hydroxide ( $\text{NH}_4\text{OH}$ ) and add water to obtain a volume of about 1,980 mL. Check the pH of the resulting solution, add more  $\text{NH}_4\text{OH}$ , as needed, to obtain a pH of 7, and dilute the solution to a volume of 2 liters with water.

5.3 Isopropyl alcohol: 99%.

## 6.0 SAMPLE COLLECTION, PRESERVATION, AND HANDLING

6.1 All samples must be collected using a sampling plan that addresses the considerations discussed in Chapter Nine of this manual.

## 7.0 PROCEDURE

7.1 Weigh 4 g of medium- or fine-textured soil or 6 g of coarse-textured soil and transfer the sample to a 50-mL, round-bottom, narrow-neck centrifuge tube. (A fine soil has >50% of the particles  $\leq 0.074$  mm, medium soil has >50%  $\geq 0.425$  mm, while a coarse soil has more than 50% of its particles  $\geq 2$  mm.)

7.2 Add 33 mL of 1.0 N NaOAc solution, stopper the tube, shake it in a mechanical shaker for 5 min, and centrifuge it until the supernatant liquid is clear.

7.3 Decant the liquid, and repeat Paragraph 7.2 three more times.

7.4 Add 33 mL of 99% isopropyl alcohol, stopper the tube, shake it in a mechanical shaker for 5 min, and centrifuge it until the supernatant liquid is clear.

7.5 Repeat the procedure described in Paragraph 7.4 two more times.

7.6 Add 33 mL of  $\text{NH}_4\text{OAc}$  solution, stopper the tube, shake it in a mechanical shaker for 5 min, and centrifuge it until the supernatant liquid is clear. Decant the washing into a 100-mL volumetric flask.

7.7 Repeat the procedure described in Paragraph 7.6 two more times.

7.8 Dilute the combined washing to the 100-mL mark with ammonium acetate solution and determine the sodium concentration by atomic absorption, emission spectroscopy, or an equivalent method.

## 8.0 QUALITY CONTROL

8.1 All quality control data should be maintained and available for easy reference or inspection.

8.2 Employ a minimum of one blank per sample batch to determine if contamination or any memory effects are occurring.

8.3 Materials of known cation-exchange capacity must be routinely analyzed.

## 9.0 METHOD PERFORMANCE

9.1 No data provided.

## 10.0 REFERENCES

10.1 This method is based on Chapman, H.D., "Cation-exchange Capacity," pp. 891-900, in C.A. Black (ed.), Method of Soil Analysis, Part 2: Chemical and Microbiological Properties, Am. Soc. Agron., Madison, Wisconsin (1965).

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