



C083

## PREPARING SAMPLES FOR IDENTIFICATION OR DIAGNOSIS

1. Prepare your sample per the instructions below or on the reverse side of this page.
2. Bring your sample to the Extension Education Center, 222 N Havana Street, Spokane WA (south of the fairgrounds). The Plant Clinic is open:
  - 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday
  - 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday
  - 9:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday (April – September)
  - Samples may also be dropped off at the Extension Main Office until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday.
  - Friday samples should be dropped off by 11:00 a.m. to allow time for examining the fresh sample.
3. Bring in the freshest sample possible.

### How to Prepare Samples for Identification/Diagnosis

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#### Preparing Insect Specimens for Identification

1. Carefully collect insect specimens
    - a) Place insect in either small vials or bottles with secure caps.
    - b) Place large adult moths and butterflies cushioned in a box or jar with cotton to minimize damage.
  2. Bring a representative sample of any affected plant material associated with the insect pest if possible.
    - a) Place plant sample material in a separate container or bag.
  3. Store samples in your refrigerator until ready to bring into Plant Clinic.
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### **Preparing Plant Specimens for Disease Diagnosis**

1. If it is not practical to bring the entire plant, try to bring plant parts that show the various stages of the problem:
  - a) a part showing the early stages of the disease,
  - b) a part that is severely affected, and
  - c) a healthy part, if available.
  - d) Place a dry paper towel in the bag with leafy samples
2. Where practical, dig up the entire plant including its root structure.
  - a) Try not to pull the plant as any diseased roots will be left behind.
  - b) Wrap the roots in a plastic bag separate from the rest of the plant to prevent soil from contaminating leaves and stems.
  - c) Place the entire sample in another plastic bag without additional moisture, as it also may cause contamination.
  - d) Place a dry paper towel in the bag with leafy samples.
3. Tree diseases can best be diagnosed by evaluating the junction of diseased and healthy tissue. Include twigs or limbs just beginning to show symptoms, but still alive. Old, dead limbs are normally not helpful.
4. Store samples in your refrigerator until ready to bring into Plant Clinic.

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### **Preparing Turf Samples for Disease Diagnosis**

1. Cut a turf square approximately 4 inches across and as deep as the roots will hold soil. Leave the soil intact. (Plugs from 1" diameter soil probes do not allow enough of a sample).
2. Bring three or four specimens each representing a different stage (healthy, slightly affected, and heavily damaged).
3. Store samples in a refrigerator until ready to bring into Plant Clinic.

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### **Preparing Plant and Weed Identification Requests**

Plants/weeds are identified in many ways. The most useful plant parts are flowers, fruits, leaves, buds, and young stems. Because some ornamental plants have many varieties, it may not be possible to determine the exact variety without the flower.

1. Collect as many plant parts as possible. Flowers, fruits/seeds, leaves, stems, buds and roots may aid in identification.
  2. Where practical, dig up the entire plant including its root structure.
  3. Place the plant specimen in a plastic bag along with a dry paper towel (don't add water) and seal.
  4. Store samples in your refrigerator until ready to bring into Plant Clinic.
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