

PLANT SPECIMEN COLLECTION GUIDE

How To Submit An Unknown Plant / Plant Disease Sample

Taking Photos

- It is always a good idea to take photos first in case something happens to the specimen or the specimen is not transportable
- Take multiple photos from different angles and make sure that they are clear
- Always provide a size reference, such as a coin, pencil, or ruler, in at least one photo
- Take high quality photos

Unknown Plant(s)

Collect Your Specimen

- Handle with care; try not to damage specimen and when necessary use PPE to protect yourself from heavy, spiny, or dirty samples
- Collect as much of the plant as possible
 - Place roots in a plastic bag and secure the mouth of the bag with tape to prevent soil from escaping
 - The stem and leaves should stick out of the top of this first bag
 - All samples will later be placed inside two an additional bags
- If the plant is very large, you can submit branches and photos- branches need to be at least 1/2in in diameter
- Record the location where the specimen was collected (include GPS coordinates, if available)

Diseased Plant(s)

Collect Your Specimen

- Handle with care; try not to damage specimen and when necessary use PPE to protect yourself from heavy, spiny, or dirty samples
- Collect plant material that shows symptoms
 - Provide a specimen with varying severity of symptoms if possible
 - Submit plants that are **DYING**, but **NOT** dead
 - Dead samples can be colonized by decay organisms, but if no dying samples are available, dead plants are acceptable
- Include as much of the plant as possible
 - While symptoms may be seen in the leaves or stem, the source of the issue may reside elsewhere
 - Place roots in a plastic bag and secure the mouth of the bag with tap to prevent soil from escaping

- The stem and leaves should stick out of the top of this first bag
 - All samples will later be placed inside two an additional bags
- Include healthy material if possible for comparison
 - Healthy material should be sent along in a separate container and should be clearly marked as “Healthy”
- If the plant is very large, you can submit branches and photos

Submitting Your Specimen

Packing Your Specimen:

- **ALL** potential invasive species **MUST** be **DOUBLE BAGGED** to minimize spreading
- Preserve the plant until you are ready to mail or during the mailing possess
 - Keep plant cool and do **NOT** add any liquid to the plant, including wet paper towels
 - Keep plant out of direct light
 - Plants can be kept in a standard refrigerator overnight if necessary
- Gently wrap specimen in paper and then enclose entire specimen in a plastic bag or other container
 - Clean trash bags can also be used for large samples; be sure there are no openings through which pathogens or pests could escape
 - Soil must be submitted in a sealed water-proof bag or container
 - Include a tag (written in pencil) with date, collector, and location information
- Place bagged specimen in a sturdy container
 - If there is extra space, provide padding to minimize damage that may come from handling during the mailing process

Drop-Off Your Specimen:

- Samples can be dropped off at:
 - Washington State University - Plant Pest Diagnostic Clinic
Department of Plant Pathology
345 Johnson Hall,
100 Dairy Road,
Pullman, WA 99164
Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
 - WSU Puyallup Research & Extension Center
Plant & Insect Diagnostic Lab
2606 West Pioneer
Puyallup, WA 98371-4998
Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm and 1:00 – 3:00 pm

- Contact your local master gardener
 - Find your county Master Gardener clinic:
 - <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/program/county/>
 - Your local master gardener can provide tips on how to:
 - Collect and send in your specimen
 - Where you should send in or drop off your specimen
 - Information about their local extension office

Mail-In Your Specimen

- Ship specimens early during the week and avoid mailing before or during holidays to minimize decay during transit
- Label package: **Perishable**
- You **MUST** fill out a submission form with your package for the Washington State University:
 - Pullman:
 - <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2194/2017/06/Commercial-Disease-Pullman-Dec2015.pdf>
 - Puyallup: <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/408/2015/02/c0084.pdf>

Clinic USPS mailing addresses:

Rachel Bomberger
 Plant Pest Diagnostic Clinic
 Department of Plant Pathology
 P.O. Box 646430,
 Pullman, WA 99164-6430

Jenny Glass
 WSU Puyallup Plant Clinic
 2606 West Pioneer
 Puyallup, WA 98371-4998

E-mail: rachel.bomberger@wsu.edu
 Phone: 509-335-3292
 Webpage:
<https://plantpath.wsu.edu/diagnostics/>

E-mail: jennyglass@wsu.edu
 Phone: 253-445-4582
 Webpage:
<https://puyallup.wsu.edu/plantclinic/>

Clinic UPS and FedEx address:

Rachel Bomberger
 Plant Pest Diagnostic Clinic
 Department of Plant Pathology
 345 Johnson Hall,
 100 Dairy Road,
 Pullman, WA 99164