

Diagnostic Clinic - GCREC

14625 C.R. 672, Wimauma, FL 33598

(813) 633-4131

Dr. James Mertely, Diagnostician

Sample Collection and Submission Instructions:

Samples that exhibit early symptom development and have plant parts that are still partially alive (green) offer the best quality samples for accurate plant disease diagnosis. Samples that are totally necrotic, dry, and long dead are not adequate for an accurate diagnosis. Dead tissue is essentially a food source for many saprophytic microbes, hence determining the primary pathogen is often impossible. The best samples arriving at the clinic represent early stages of disease development (i.e. before the plant part is totally necrotic or mush). Samples should be accompanied by a complete data form, which can be found here [Sample Submission Form](#) and is available at our center.

Here are some additional guidelines for submitting plant samples:

1. Take samples before applying pesticides, otherwise the ability to recover pathogens may be limited. Submit generous amounts of plant material representing a range of symptoms.
2. Don't add water or pack a sample that is wet.
3. Keep sample refrigerated after collection until they are submitted. After collecting good sample, do not ruin them by allowing them to bake in the sun or on the back seat of a car prior to submission.
4. Do not mix samples in the same submission bag. Moisture from root samples will contribute to the decay of foliage samples if they are mixed together.
5. Plant disease identification procedures do not utilize soil. Excess soil can be hand shaken from root systems but leave enough soil to keep roots at field moisture levels.
6. Please mark sample packages with a "warning" if sample contains thorns or spines.
7. All samples must be accompanied with a completed [Sample Submission Form](#). These forms are available at the county Extension offices, on-line, or at the center. Give complete information on the front page only of the form and keep the form separate from the sample. You are encouraged to include any pertinent information under the remarks area of the form. The more information available, the more likely a problem can be associated with possible causes.
8. Remember to note recent pesticide history on the Sample Submission Form accompanying the sample.

9. Samples arriving from sites in Florida that are 2 days or less mailing time from a clinic, can be sealed in plastic bags for shipping.

10. Samples arriving from distances greater than 2 days mailing time from a clinic, should be packed tightly in a box with dry paper. Do not seal plastic because of the likelihood of sample deterioration during the mailing period. Do not add moisture.

11. Mail samples early in the week to avoid a weekend layover in the post office.

12. For emergency samples, use overnight courier services or US overnight mail.

Once your sample is submitted, you will be issued a Sample Number to be referenced for results. It may take up to a week for results from our lab, and you will be personally contacted with the outcome and possible suggestion to resolve your problem.