

HOW TO SELECT AND SEND SPECIMENS FOR PLANT IDENTIFICATION TO THE RUTGERS PLANT DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

I. SAMPLING:

The ideal plant sample consists of the entire plant in flower or bearing seeds or fruit. Most plant taxonomic keys use flower and fruit characteristics for plant classification. The minimum sample for a woody plant consists of a shoot (twig), representing at least 2 years growth, preferably with leaves attached. The entire plant, including roots, is required for many herbaceous plants. Detached leaves are seldom adequate for identification.

The experienced plant taxonomist can often identify a plant at least to family or genus level from an incomplete sample. However, a reliable species level identification, when possible, requires a complete sample.

II. PACKING/SHIPPING:

- a) Remove excess water or dew from the sample. Press the material between dry toweling or newspaper. **DO NOT** wrap plant material in plastic or seal in a plastic bag. Wrap each specimen separately.
- b) Select a strong container, such as a corrugated box or mailing tube, that will not crush in transit.
- c) Mail samples early in the week. Samples mailed on Thursday or Friday generally remain in the post office over the weekend where high temperatures can stimulate decay.
- d) Complete and enclose this sample submission form and the **appropriate payment (see below) for each sample to be analyzed**. Make checks or money orders payable to **Rutgers, The State University**. See reverse for credit card payment. (Fees are subject to change.)

III. **PAYMENT: All fees are per sample.**

In-state.....	\$50
Out-of-state.....	\$100

IV. **SHIPPING ADDRESS: Please use next day shipping for timely delivery of fresh samples.**

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