



SAMPLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST

New Mexico State University – Plant Diagnostic Clinic



Successful plant disease, weed and insect identification is a team effort! Proper diagnosis begins with the submission of good quality specimens accompanied by accurate and complete information. Please follow these guidelines and submit the best sample possible. If submitted samples are insufficient for diagnosis, you will be asked to submit a new sample.

County Extension Agents should submit samples through the New Mexico Distance Diagnostic System (NMSU DDDI). The link to the submission page and other information on how to use NMDDS is available on the NMSU Plant Clinic Webpage (<http://plantclinic.nmsu.edu>) or by contacting Jason French (575-646-1965).

Please be advised, if pests of regulatory significance are identified on submitted samples, we are required to notify the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.

General sample submission:

- Preserve and ship appropriately for the type of specimen – consider what the specimen will look like after packing and shipping.
- Do not collect or send dry or dead plant material.
- If possible, collect the entire plant, otherwise collect portions of the affected plant including the margin between diseased and healthy tissue - a good sample includes all relevant plant parts.
- Do not wash soil from roots or add moisture to any sample.
- Wrap foliage in dry paper towels.
- Wrap root ball in its own bag and seal around stem to prevent soil from contaminating leaves.
- For turf samples, wrap sample in dry newspaper or paper towels.
- Place sample in a zip-top bag and seal.
- For suspected exotic species and/or high-risk pests, decontaminate the outside of the sample bag with an appropriate disinfectant - (70% isopropyl alcohol, 10% bleach) – and then place the sample bag inside a second zip-top bag and seal.
- Place in a sturdy box or padded envelope.
- Complete appropriate submission form [e.g. **General Sample Submission Form: forms may be submitted through the New Mexico Distance Diagnostic System (NMSU DDDI) or may be downloaded from the NMSU Plant Clinic webpage (<http://plantclinic.nmsu.edu>)**] with accurate collection data (the more information provided the better) - include complete contact information including email address (when applicable).
- Place completed submission form in separate zip-top bag and place in box/envelope.
- Skip to 'Final Packing and Notification Instructions.'

Submission for Plant/Weed Identification:

- Collect intact specimens including stems with leaves attached, flowers, fruit, seeds and roots whenever possible.
- Include seedlings and mature plants when both are present.
- Wrap in dry paper towel or newspaper and place between two pieces of cardboard.
- Pack in sturdy container or padded envelope.
- Complete a **Plant/Weed Identification Form** (available through NMSU DDDI) with accurate information - include complete contact information including email address (when applicable).
- Skip to 'Final Packing and Notification Instructions.'

Submission of Insects and Arthropods for Identification:

- Collect multiple samples of all life stages, if possible.
- Collect intact specimens (not just body parts).
- Place in sturdy container – vials, pill bottles, film containers.
- For insects associated with plant material, place plant material and insects in a plastic bag.
- Pack in sturdy box, mailing tube or padded envelope.
- Complete an **Insect/Arthropod Identification Form** (available through NMSU DDDI) with accurate collection data (the more information provided the better) - include complete contact information including email address (when applicable).
- Place completed form in separate zip-top bag and place in the packing container.
- Skip to 'Final Packing and Notification Instructions.'

Submission of Soil Samples for Nematode Analysis:

- Samples are best collected in the fall after the last irrigation
- Collect a composite of several samples from the field or from around affected plants.
- Collect a minimum of 1-½ pints of soil and keep in a zip-top bag.
- Keep sample cool prior to shipment – do not freeze.
- Complete a **Nematode Soil Analysis Submission Form** (available through NMSU DDDI or from the Plant Clinic webpage) with accurate information – include complete contact information including email address (when applicable).
- Place Form in a separate zip-top bag.
- Place sample and submission form in a sturdy box.
- Continue with 'Final Packing and Notification Instructions.'

Final Packing and Notification Instructions

- Submit quality digital or print photos of symptoms/damage if possible – prints should be included with submission form, digital images may be submitted through NMSU DDDI.
- If no submission form is available include information on plant species submitted, field history, symptoms, collection location and date, cultural practices, weather conditions, other observations, your contact information including email address.
- Keep samples cool (not frozen) prior to shipment.
- Seal all seams of the box with shipping tape.
- Ship via overnight mail or drive to diagnostic lab to deliver personally.
- **Do not mail on Fridays, weekends, or holidays.**
- **For suspected exotics or high-risk pests, immediately notify the diagnosticians and ship by next day delivery or deliver personally. Avoid alarmist behavior and only notify necessary personnel – county extension, diagnosticians, New Mexico Department of Agriculture.**
- **If you have questions about collecting, packaging or shipping specimens please contact you local county extension office or the NMSU Plant Diagnostic Clinic: Jason French (575-646-1965).**

- Mail samples to:
NMSU Plant Diagnostic Clinic
P.O. Box 30003, MSC 3AE
945 College Ave. (required for overnight –Fed Ex and UPS - delivery)
Las Cruces, NM 88003
Phone: (575) 646-1965