

How to Request a Sample

Washington County

Insect or plant problems are often difficult to diagnose over the phone.
In many instances, you'll need to ask the client to bring a fresh sample to the office.
An accurate diagnosis is required before you suggest management recommendations.

Arthropods (Insect, Spider, Etc.)

- **To request a sample from a client, ask for:**
 - Multiple specimens if possible
 - Enclosed in a crush proof, clear container
- **Dead insect samples can be mailed to the office in crush proof, sealed containers**
- **If the sample is to be held for another shift to ID:**
 - Secure it in a clear container.
(Petri dishes and small jars are on top of the Insect Cabinet)
 - Label with the date and client's name
 - Place sample in designated place. (To preserve a specimen over a weekend or holiday, place in refrigerator. Don't freeze spiders and caterpillars)
 - Fill out a yellow Insect Referral
 - Whenever possible, attach Insect Referral to container
- **If a damaged specimen is discarded**, retain the petri dish, clean it, and return it to the file drawer below the monitor

Plants and/or Plant Parts

- **Whenever practical, request an entire plant**
Ask the client to *dig it up* just before coming into office
Also tell client to:
 - Gently shake soil from roots
 - Don't wash the roots
 - Enclose the roots in a plastic bag
 - Next, insert the entire plant into a larger plastic bag
- **If a branch with leaf, needle, and/or stem problems:**
 - A fresh sample, 12-18 inches long
 - Include a progression of healthy through affected/dead parts. (The transition zone often contains the telltale evidence required for an accurate diagnosis)
- **If lawn:**
 - A 4" x 4" square, 2 inches deep, the roots included
 - The square should include the transition zone of healthy to affected/dead
- **Good quality photos are also helpful** – Ask for overall and close-up shots of the plant, as well as the plant's surroundings
The client may email digital pictures to mastergardener.wc@oregonstate.edu
- **If the sample is to be held for another shift to ID:**
 - Enclose it in a clear container. (Small bags are in the kitchen, extra large bags are at the bottom of the MG office wastebasket)
 - Label with the date and client's name
 - Fill out the appropriate Referral form:
 1. Plant for ID Only = blue
 2. Plant Problem = green
 - Whenever possible, attach Referral form to enclosed sample