The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
123 Huntington Street, P. O. Box 1106
New Haven, CT 06504
(203)974-8601
www.ct.gov/caes/pdio

PLANT DISEASE INFORMATION OFFICE
SAMPLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The Plant Disease Information Office (PDIO) at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) is a full-service plant disease diagnostic laboratory that assists all Connecticut stakeholders, including homeowners and professionals.

For the fast, accurate, professional service that you need and demand, please keep a few things in mind when submitting samples. Please use the PDIO Sample Submission Form (CAES-PDIO-Form-012-001) and provide as much information on the form as possible. For faster response, please include your phone number and email address and indicate how you would prefer to receive the results. Samples should be submitted to:

Mailing Address:
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Plant Disease Information Office
P. O. Box 1106
New Haven, CT 06504

Physical Address (for UPS, FedEx, etc.):
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Plant Disease Information Office
123 Huntington Street
New Haven, CT 06511

Collecting Plant Specimens for Disease Diagnosis/or Plant Identification

Sample must be fresh and in good condition. It is helpful if the sample is taken from an area that has early symptoms of the problem. Damaged or completely dead specimens are often unidentifiable and requests for additional samples can cause delays. Collect samples prior to any pesticide applications when possible. Once pesticides have been applied, it may be difficult to obtain an accurate diagnosis.

1. Leaves, Branches or Fleshy Parts of Woody Ornamentals: send specimens representing early and moderate stages of the symptoms you are observing. Collect at least 10 leaves and press them flat between heavy papers or cardboard and place in plastic bags. For twig or branch cankers, include healthy portions from above and below the diseased area. Wrap fleshy parts in dry paper and place in a plastic bag.
2. Herbaceous Plants with Decline or Wilt: for general decline or dying of plants, send whole plants showing early symptoms. Dig the plant carefully to keep the roots and adjacent soil intact. Send several plants. Wrap the roots in a plastic bag and secure at the stem so the soil does not contaminate the aboveground portions. Place the entire plant, with wrapped roots, in another plastic bag.
3. Trees with Symptoms of Wilt: collect several branches approximately ½ to 1 inch in diameter from portions of the canopy that are actively wilting or yellowing but not totally dead. Branches can be cut into pieces and put in a plastic bag.
4. Turf: sample plugs should be at least 4-6 square inches and include the transition area between the diseased and healthy portion of grass. The sample should also be cut deep enough so as to include the root system. Wrap the sample in newspaper and place it in a plastic bag.
5. Plant and Weed Identification: include a 6-10 inch sample of the terminal (tip) portion of the stem with side buds, leaves, flowers, and fruit in identifiable condition.

Packaging and Mailing Samples

DO NOT add water in plastic bags. Rapid delivery may be critical.

1. Package the sample plastic bags and the sample submission form in a sturdy, crush-proof box.
2. If submitting more than one sample, please label the outside of each bag clearly with a permanent marker.
3. Add packing materials such as newspaper to prevent specimen damage during shipment.
4. Try to mail the sample as quickly as possible. If the sample cannot be mailed immediately, keep it refrigerated or out of direct sunlight and hot conditions.
5. Mail packages to arrive on weekdays. DO NOT mail late in the week to ensure that packages won't sit in the post office over the weekend.

Please feel free to call the office with any questions prior to submitting your sample. You can contact Dr. Yonghao Li by telephone (203-974-8601) or email Yonghao.Li@ct.gov. Providing answers to your important questions prior to sample submission may enable us to get you the answers you need more quickly. When possible, please submit multiple digital images of affected plants including the surrounding area and close-up images via email, which allows a more timely response and also guide us when instructing the client how to submit a physical sample of the plant problem. The PDIO also provides an informational website that is located at the following URL address: http://www.ct.gov/caes/pdio.