



# UNL Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic

## Sample Preparation and Mailing

1. Complete background information is very important!
  - a. Please **fill out the specimen identification form completely!**
  - b. Provide a description of the problem. Information should include location, environmental conditions and cultural practices.
  - c. Photographs, sketches or maps can be very useful.
2. Select plant samples that show a transition from healthy to unhealthy or damaged. Plant material that has been dead for some time may not exhibit clear symptoms or be useful.
3. Wrap plant material in absorbent toweling and then place in a plastic bag. This usually keeps the samples from drying out. **Do not place material in newspaper or cardboard alone, as the sample will be unusable by the time it arrives at the lab. There is usually no need to add water or wet the packing material IF a plastic bag with absorbent toweling is used.**
4. Send a **complete sample** composed of roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruit when possible. One leaf is not enough. Time of flowering is crucial when requesting a weed or plant ID. Try to send more than one insect.
5. Insects should be sent in a **crush-proof container**. Soft-bodied or tiny specimens should be placed in a tight-sealing bottle with a preservative such as alcohol. Hard-bodied specimens, or damaged materials or plants should be wrapped in loose tissue. Send no living insects unless requested.
6. Keep the sample fresh and in good condition. All samples should be placed into sturdy containers for mailing, such as cardboard boxes, mailing tubes or reinforced padded envelopes. **Do not mail anything later than Thursday morning**, as samples may deteriorate over the weekend. Samples retain good quality when refrigerated if it is necessary for you to hold them.

**Send *All* samples to the address below:**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Plant & Pest Diagnostic Clinic  
448 Plant Sciences  
P.O. Box 830722  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0722