



**Extension
Master
Gardener**

How to Handle Insect & Plant Specimens for Identification

1. Fill out an Insect and Disease Diagnosis Worksheet (see pages 2-3) for **each specimen**. Please be **COMPLETE**; the accuracy of your diagnosis depends on the information you supply. **Note:** If you have more than 3 specimens, a charge of \$15 is **required** for each additional specimen.
2. Pick and pack the specimens properly, being sure to use a **CRUSHPROOF CARDBOARD BOX**, according to the following directions:
 - **Insects:** Collect 5-10 samples of the insect you would like identified. Include samples of the plant host (if applicable to a plant issue), as well as the insect. Place them in a container (a plastic Rx bottle works well) in the freezer overnight. This will usually kill the insects so they do not escape when we open them here. After they are dead, tape the container shut, and place it with packing filler and the completed worksheet in a **crushproof cardboard box**.
 - **Plants: Disease issues?** Don't be afraid to collect a large sample because a small sample may not contain all the signs needed to make an accurate diagnosis. Send a representative sample, including both damaged and healthy tissue. Plant material that has been dead for some time is useless in determining the causal agent.
 - **Plant Identification:** Include leaves, stems, roots, and flowering or seed bearing portions of the plant. Place green leaves between dry paper towels and enclose them in a plastic bag **without added moisture**. Carefully shake excess soil from roots. Place roots in a plastic bag with **moist** (not water-logged) wood shavings or torn paper towels to prevent material from drying out. Wrap fruits separately and **without added moisture**. Place your samples and the completed worksheet in a **crushproof cardboard box**.
3. To lessen the possibility of sample deterioration over the weekend, mail specimens **no later than** Wednesday morning to:

UVM Extension Master Gardener
63 Carrigan Dr., Jeffords-206
Burlington, VT 05405-0107

WALK-IN HOURS

For seasonal hours, please call PRIOR to visiting: 1-800-639-2230 or locally in Chittenden County 656-5421.

DIRECTIONS TO MASTER GARDENER HELPLINE OFFICE

Take I-89 to Exit 14W. This brings you onto Route 2 west (Williston Road). Bear right after the second light onto East Avenue. Take a left @ the first light onto Carrigan Dr. Go thru the light @ the top of the hill (Jeffords will be on your left). At your first left there are metered parking spaces in the south end of the parking lot. There are also 3 parking meters located just after the first left in the north end of Jeffords. The Extension Master Gardener Helpline office is located on the 2nd floor, Room 201.

WEED IDENTIFICATION

Due to the high volume of all types of plant and insect specimens submitted during the growing season; weed identification will only be made to the genus level. Control or eradication methods can be correctly determined, and will be provided to you, based on the specimen's genus.

Vt. Master Gardener Insect & Disease Diagnosis Worksheet

Specimen #: _____
(for office use only)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

1. Type of Problem: Houseplant Household Yard (host unknown) Yard or garden pest (host known)

If problem is a household insect, skip to Question 15.

2. Host: Tree Vegetable Annuals Perennials House Plant

3. Common name of host plant: _____

4. How long have you had the affected plant? _____

5. Plant parts affected: Leaves Stem Roots Entire Plant
 Flowers Trunk Fruit Unknown

6. Symptoms noticed:

- LEAVES: Yellowing Holes in leaves Leaf rotting or streaking
 Wilt Leaf spots Abnormal growth or gall
 Defoliation Burning of margins Leaf curled or puckered
 Other: _____

- BRANCHES/TRUNK: Cracks in bark Gummy discharge White stuff on bark
 Stunting Abnormal growth on twigs or stem
 Hole in trunk Abnormal growth on trunk Wilted branch tip
 Other: _____

7. Distribution of damage or disease symptoms on the plant:

- Top branches Tip of branches Scattered throughout
 Bottom branches All branches on one side All over plant

8. When was the problem first noticed? _____

9. Soil drainage: Very wet Very dry Good drainage

10. How often do you water: Is soil allowed to dry between watering? Yes No

Does container have drainage holes? Yes No

11. Recent weather: Rainy/wet Very dry Cold Normal/Average

12. Light condition: If outside: Full sun Light shade Heavy shade

If inside: Direct sun Indirect sun Little or no light

13. Current management practices (give brand, rates, amount used, dates of application):

Fertilizer: _____

Pesticides: _____

Weed killer: _____

14. Recent environmental disturbances:

Soil added or removed Construction nearby High winds

Gas or sewer leaks Frost High temperature

Other: _____

15. If it is an insect problem, how many insects have you seen? (This applies to every type of pest problem, not just household pests.)

A few (1 or 2) Moderate amount (10-20) Too many to count

16. How long has the pest been a problem? _____

17. Where was the problem seen? (Check all that apply)

Kitchen Dining Room Living Room Bed Room Stored Food Products -
(cereal, pet food, bird seed)

Basement Attic Garage Around foundation

Closets Window Sills Porch In food

In clothes In Rugs In Bed Other: _____

18. Other information that might be useful: _____

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