



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

To: Extension Agents and Staff

Date: 19 August 2020

Re: Plant Disease Clinic current sample submission policy

Due to COVID-19, the Plant Disease Clinic has reduced staffing in the laboratory. Therefore, the Plant Clinic is continuing to prioritize samples from commercial producers. The current sample submission policy is detailed below and has **not** been altered from the policy released on 4/7/20. The Plant Disease Clinic will continue to provide diagnostic services to Virginia clientele via the Extension offices. Please know that we are doing our best to maintain diagnostic services during this time.

- **Commercial Clients:** Samples from commercial growers must first be submitted as digital images. If the problem cannot be diagnosed from the images, we will arrange to accept a physical sample sent to the Plant Clinic.
- **Non-Commercial Clients:** All samples from non-commercial growers (e.g. samples from landscapes, home gardens, etc.) **must be submitted as digital images**. Physical samples from non-commercial clients will not be accepted at this time.
- **Landscape Professionals / Arborists:** As for non-commercial clients, samples must be submitted as digital images; physical samples are not being accepted at this time.

Please refer to: the *Guidance for Submitting a Good Digital Submission* on our Submitting Samples page (<https://spes.vt.edu/affiliated/plant-disease-clinic/submitting-samples.html>), which provides examples and guidance for providing a good digital submission.

How to Submit Digital Images:

1. All digital images of plant problems for disease diagnosis should be submitted through the local county Extension agent or other designated Extension office personnel to the Plant Clinic at the following email address: clinic@vt.edu.
2. Images from clients should be screened by Extension personnel (e.g. eliminate poorly focused images, etc.) before sending to the Plant Clinic. Request better images from your client if necessary. Three to four well-focused images that show the pattern of the problem in the location, the overall symptoms on the whole plant and a close-up image of the symptoms are recommended.
3. The client or Extension agent must fill out the Plant Clinic diagnostic form (<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/450/450-097/450-097.html>) as completely as possible. **A PDF or image of the completed diagnostic form must accompany each set of digital images.**
4. The Extension agent or designated Extension personnel should send digital submissions to clinic@vt.edu. **Commercial clients may be cc'd to the submission to expedite the process, but please do not cc: non-commercial clientele to the digital submission.**
5. If the digital submission is from a commercial client, we will quickly follow up with the agent and the client if we need to request a physical sample.
6. Diagnostic reports will be routed to the submitting Extension agent.