

SAMPLING PROCEDURE FOR SUCCESSFUL WEED IDENTIFICATION

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Accurate weed identification is the first step in providing a sound management recommendation and can determine if control measures will be successful. If you have weeds you would like to have identified, the following procedure will allow for the greatest chance of accurate identification. Working with live specimens is the most reliable method to determine proper plant identification. In many cases, however, digital photos can work if they are of good quality.

Below are the steps you should use when sending plant samples or pictures of plants to have them identified:

FRESH SAMPLES

1. Collect infested plants. For seedling plants, collect the entire plant (tops and roots). For mature plants, collect the entire plant with flowers and/or seed heads.
2. Bring fresh samples to your local county Extension office. If mailing:
 - a. Place the sample in a sealed plastic bag with moist paper towels and keep it cool.
 - b. Place the sample in an appropriate, sturdy shipping container or large envelope. Mail immediately by the quickest transit method available to avoid deterioration.

DIGITAL PICTURES

1. Take pictures of the entire plant in its natural environment, removing any other vegetation around it. Avoid inconsistent lighting, such as overcast lighting in one picture and full sun in the next. Be sure to capture leaves, stems, roots, and flowers, with a blurred background if possible. In many cases, you can remove the plant from the soil, brush or wash off the soil from the roots, and lay it on a dark, non-reflective background (black felt is ideal).



Photos by Casey Reynolds, PhD

2. Save the picture in a JPEG format with a clear resolution that shows the details of the plant.

E-MAIL AND SHIPPING INFORMATION

Please provide no more than five separate plant samples at a time unless prior arrangements have been made.

Bring fresh samples to your local county Extension office with the following information. If you are sending photos, e-mail them to your county Extension agent and include the following information:

- ▶ Your name
- ▶ Phone number
- ▶ E-mail address
- ▶ Date collected
- ▶ County where collected
- ▶ Location found (pasture, lawn, field crop, forest, etc.)
- ▶ If found in a pasture, were livestock present?
- ▶ Site characteristics, if available (soil type, pH, soil compaction, etc.)
- ▶ Please indicate if you require additional information (control measures, toxicity information, etc.)

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