UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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# Request for Plant Information[1]

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The Request for Plant Information (SR024) is the form that must accompany samples submitted to the UF/IFAS Plant Identification and Information Service.

The Request for Plant Information is available in printable form through the Ask IFAS website. The form gives details about how to collect, package, and send plant samples to the University of Florida Herbarium.

Guidelines for Collecting and Submitting Plant Samples for Identification

UF/IFAS Plant Identification and Information Service

SAMPLE SUBMISSION FORM

A service supported by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and the Florida Museum of Natural History

**Complete one form for each sample and send to:**

University of Florida Herbarium
Florida Museum of Natural History
379 Dickinson Hall, 1659 Museum Rd.
PO Box 117800
Gainesville, FL 32611-7800

1. For a quick response, we encourage you to submit sample information and photos via the UF/IFAS Distance Diagnostic and Identification System (DDIS) and mail a physical sample with a printout of the DDIS sample information. We will respond with an identification via DDIS.
2. Do not send more than 5 plant samples at one time unless you have made arrangements with us in advance. If you are sending multiple samples, please number each sample and the corresponding form, and we will use these numbers when providing you with identifications.
3. Each sample must be accompanied by UF/IFAS Form 3100/01-2018 or a printout of the DDIS sample information. Our ability to provide an accurate and timely identification is dependent on the quality of the sample, as well as the quality of the information provided on the sample submission form. Please try to provide the requested information as completely as possible. Potentially diagnostic characteristics such as color, fragrance, and the presence of latex often do not persist in shipment, so we rely on you to report this information to us.
4. Ideally, each sample should consist of a stem with multiple complete leaves attached, and flowers or fruit. A single leaf or part of a compound leaf is rarely sufficient for identification. Please include the roots of herbaceous plant samples whenever possible, but be sure to remove all soil from the plant roots.
5. If you are not able to send a good quality sample:
   - Provide as much supplemental information as possible on the sample submission form
   - Take some photos and send them by email or print out and include with the physical sample
   - Wait until the plant is larger and/or fertile
6. You may submit a fresh plant sample or a dried/pressed sample. Fresh samples are preferred, but are prone to rotting in shipment, especially during the hottest months of the year. If you are submitting fresh plant material be sure to ship by the quickest means possible (hand delivery, overnight, or priority mail).
   - For fresh plant material, bend or fold as needed, wrap completely in dry paper towels (to exclude air and light), and place inside a sealed plastic bag. If the sample includes large, juicy fruit, remove the fruit and bag it separately from the rest of the plant. Fresh, bagged samples are best shipped in boxes, but padded envelopes may be appropriate for smaller or more succulent plants. It is critical that fresh plant material be shipped promptly after collection.
   - To press a sample for shipment, place it between a folded piece of newspaper, spread out the plant so that leaf arrangement and flowers/fruit are obvious, fold the newspaper over the plant, and place between 2 pieces of cardboard. Use rubber bands,

tape, or paper clips to secure the edges of the cardboards (to prevent the plant material from sliding out), and place inside an envelope or box. Please do not tape the plant to the paper or use staples to close the newspaper.

7. If the sample you have submitted is not sufficient for a confident species-level identification, we may request that you provide additional information or additional samples with diagnostic features.
8. We make every effort to provide accurate identifications. However, some plant groups are taxonomically complex or poorly known, and we may not always be able to provide a species-level identification. We may be able to request identification assistance from specialists at other institutions, but that process requires additional specimens and can take several months or longer.
9. Samples sent in for identification will NOT be returned.
10. For more information about submitting samples (or if you have a large/unusual sample that you're unsure how to submit) contact Marc S. Frank, Extension Botanist at mfrank@flmnh.ufl.edu or (352) 273-1994.

[1] This document is RFSR024, one of a series of the UF/IFAS Department of Plant Pathology. Original publication date March 2002. Revised April 2008, January 2018, and July 2023. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/ for the currently supported version of this publication.

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