

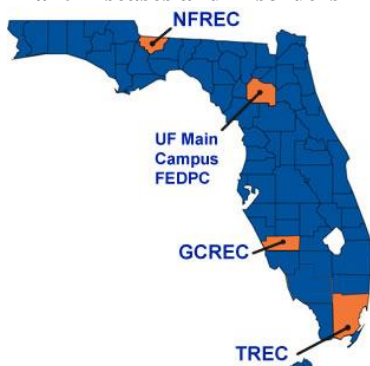


## Taking the Guesswork out of Pest Diagnosis: University of Florida and Manatee County Diagnostic Services

By: Crystal Snodgrass, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Agent, Manatee County

As a commercial grower or homeowner with a suspect insect or disease problem, you want to get accurate results as quickly as possible. With so many resources available, it can be difficult to decipher the process of submitting a sample for analysis. UF/IFAS and Manatee County Extension Service provide affordable options to determine the types of pests that are bugging you! We offer diagnostic services for plant disease and insect identification as well as soil and water testing.

### Plant Diseases and Disorders



**Florida Extension Plant Diagnostic Network:** Consists of 4 diagnostic clinics statewide, with the Gainesville clinic serving as the hub. To access information on individual clinics please visit: <http://fpdn.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Diagnostic services include analysis of plant material for fungal, bacterial and viral pathogens and appropriate recommendations for control based on UF/IFAS pest management guidelines.

**Fees:** There is a \$40 fee associated with each sample submission that covers the cost of sample materials and processing. Please make your \$40.00 check payable to “University of Florida.”

**Forms:** Along with your sample you must submit a plant Disease Diagnosis Form. There are different forms depending on which clinic you choose. The forms and contact information for each lab are available on each lab’s website:

**NFREC:** <http://fpdn.ifas.ufl.edu/nfrec.shtml>

**UF Main Campus:** <http://fpdn.ifas.ufl.edu/ufmain.shtml>

**GCREC:** <http://strawberry.ifas.ufl.edu/DiagnosticLab/diagnosticpage.htm>

**Submission guidelines:** Clinics will no longer accept samples on Fridays. Please be sure that your sample will arrive Monday through Thursday.

**Tips for the best diagnosis** can be found in the EDIS publication entitled, “Sample Submission Guide for Plant Diagnostic Clinics of the Florida Plant Diagnostic Network” and available online at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/sr007>

**Distance Diagnostic and Identification System (DDIS):** This is an online resource to diagnose pest problems based on digital images. When you submit images to the website, specialists from around the state can diagnose the pest and provide recommendations. The photos then become part of a digital library which may be used for educational purposes and future diagnoses. The DDIS is free for users. You may submit a sample to a clinic and photos on DDIS if you choose. The DDIS website can be accessed here: <http://ddis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

**Insects:** Insect samples may be sent to the Insect Identification Laboratory in Gainesville.

<http://fpdn.ifas.ufl.edu/ufmain-insect-lab.shtml>. There is an \$8.00 fee per submission which does not include

shipping. Collection and submission tips are available at the website above. The sample submission form is available here: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/SR/SR02200.pdf>

**Nematodes:** If you suspect nematodes are a problem you may want to submit a sample to the Nematode Assay Lab. Instructions for collecting and submitting a nematode sample may be found here: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/sr011>. There is a \$20.00 in state fee for submission made payable to the University of Florida. Please be sure to submit the nematode assay form available on the website above.

### **Soil/Water testing**

**University of Florida Extension Soil Testing Laboratory:** offers comprehensive soil and water testing for both homeowners and commercial producers. Visit this site to get started: <http://soilslab.ifas.ufl.edu/ESTL%20Home.asp>

Once here, click on the ESTL tests tab and choose the appropriate test category. Submission forms and guidelines are listed for each test offered. For soil testing, there are several different tests available with variable fees associated. Please consult your local extension office for assistance in choosing tests.

### **Services available at Manatee County Extension**

**Master Gardener Plant Clinic:** Master Gardener volunteers man a plant clinic Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (closed Wednesdays for training) from 9am-4pm to help answer pest questions for non-commercial clientele. Plant clinic diagnostic services are free of charge.

**Soil/Water Testing:** Basic soil and water testing is available to both homeowners and commercial producers. Soil and water testing is limited to pH and EC (soluble salts) determination. If it is determined that further information is needed, we may recommend sending a sample to the UF Extension Soil Testing Laboratory. The fee schedule for commercial producers varies. The fee schedule for homeowners:

pH only: \$3.00

EC only \$3.00

pH and EC: \$5.00 per sample