



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

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Virginia Cooperative Extension, Fairfax County Office, Master Gardener Program
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PLANT IDENTIFICATION REQUEST FORM

Revised 4/2025

(To be completed by Master Gardener receiving the sample)

Plant Clinic _____ Date _____

Master Gardener _____ (one name only)

EMAIL _____

Client - Please fill out this form as completely and accurately as you can. If your samples appear to be different plants, use a separate form for each. Print legibly.

CLIENT NAME: _____ **Date:** _____

ADDRESS (street, P.O. Box) _____

CITY, STATE, & ZIP _____

PHONE: _____ (number where you can be reached in the daytime)

EMAIL _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING PHYSICAL AND/OR PHOTO SAMPLES

Physical Samples - Samples should be fresh and consist of leaves attached to stems, twigs, or branches, including the growing tip. Include flowers, seeds and fruit if available. Samples should be 6 inches to 12 inches, more if it is a large-leaved plant. The sample should come directly from the plant itself and not a portion or leaf that has fallen to the ground. Submit samples in a plastic bag. Do not use paper bags, tape, or envelopes. This completed form should be attached to the outside of the plastic bag. If you are also emailing photos to help with this ID, check this box

Photo samples - Send up to 3 digital photos that are clear and in focus. Cell phone photos are fine. Try to avoid strong shadows or photographing in poor light. Outdoor photos are best taken on overcast days.

For herbaceous plants (perennials, annuals, weeds, etc.) -

- a photo of the whole plant or, for groundcovers, a portion of the bed covering a few plants; OR for turfgrass and small weeds, pull or dig up a plant, including roots and runners, rinse off soil, and photograph entire plant.
- if possible, a close-up photo of the flowering portion or seed head. If the plant is now setting buds or sending up a flowering stem, please wait until a flower has opened.

For woody trees or shrubs -

- photo of the mature bark from the trunk
- photo showing about 2-3 feet of a branch

For all plants - Provide a closeup photo showing one or a few leaves/ needles, including where the leaf attaches to the branch or stem. This photo needs to be sharp enough to show if the leaf edges are smooth or serrated and whether there are hairs on the surface of the leaf.

(OVER) - Complete reverse side

Check one or more of the listed alternatives for each question below and provide any other relevant information.

Is your sample: a tree, shrub or bush, vine, weed, flowering herbaceous (not woody), grass, indoor plant (tropical), other _____.

Is your sample: an evergreen (keeps leaves all year), semi-deciduous (keeps some leaves, some winters), deciduous (loses leaves in fall or winter), don't know

If plant is deciduous (leaves fall off in winter), what color were the leaves in the fall? _____.

If your sample is a tree or shrub, about how large is it: (Height and width, ex. 4 ft. X 4 ft.) _____.

If your sample is an herbaceous (not woody) plant -

How tall is it now? _____. What is the tallest you have seen it grow? _____.

Do you think this plant is: planted by somebody, volunteer seedling, do not know.

How old is the plant: Newly planted/sprouted, 1-2 yrs., 3-5 yrs., 6-10 yrs., 10+ yrs., do not know.

Location of the plant: lawn, flower bed, vegetable garden, container, foundation plant (next to bldg.), other _____.

Sun exposure (check as many as apply) - morning sun, midday/afternoon sun, dappled shade, full shade

Soil Moisture - a wet area (incl near downspout), dry area, not especially wet or dry

Does the plant bloom: yes, no, do not know.

- A) If yes, when does it normally bloom (month(s))? _____
- B) If you can, describe the flower (color, size of bloom, a single bloom or several flowers clustered together, shape and fragrance) _____
- C) If you can, describe berries, fruit or pods: (size, shape, color, fragrance)

Additional Information - Please provide any thoughts, observations, or other information that might be useful.

Do you want recommendations to control, remove, or care for this plant? Yes, No

Physical Samples – Drop off your sealed container and completed form at a Master Gardener Plant Clinic or at the Virginia Cooperative Extension Fairfax County Office, see address in Page 1 header. Photos can be physically attached or sent by email to the lab at vceffxlab@gmail.com.

Photo Samples - Submit your completed form and your photographs as attachments to an email message sent to vceffxlab@gmail.com. If you already submitted a form with physical sample, email should include that date and location.

A lab member may contact you for addition information or to request another photo or physical sample, if needed.

