

Needle Sampling Protocol

2026 FHDL Auburn University

-----SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS-----

Samples are recorded and processed routinely by the date and time in which they are received. All samples will be initially processed within five days of receipt with results available one to six weeks after processing, depending on requested diagnostics. Some laboratory diagnostic techniques take longer than others, which may affect result punctuality. Each tree should be individually bagged and labeled.

Sample Collection

Tree disease diagnosis is largely dependent on the quality of the sample and on the relevant information provided by the submitter. Samples must be of sufficient quality and quantity to allow for proper laboratory testing and pertinent information, such as sample tree identification, is essential.

1. Samples should be collected from symptomatic **(NOT DEAD)** trees showing thinning/transparent crowns, and foliage discoloration.
2. Samples should NOT be collected from dead trees; determining the casual agent from such trees is highly unlikely.
3. Submit a generous amount of sample material to allow for all required laboratory processes. Remove needles from the branch. Sterilize all tools between trees with alcohol or hand sanitizer.
4. Keep all samples separated and cool until ready to be shipped, do not expose collected needles to high temperatures. Place samples in an envelope or paper bag **(NOT PLASTIC)**.
5. Complete a "Tree Disease Diagnostic Form" for each sample, available on the Forest Health Cooperative webpage (<https://fp.auburn.edu/ForestHealthCooperative/default.htm>).
6. Samples may be delivered in person or mailed (between Monday-Wednesday) to the Forest Health Dynamics Laboratory, 602 Duncan Drive, Ste 3301, Auburn University, AL 36849.
7. When submitting samples by mail, have the samples overnighted through either Fedex or UPS, then send us an email letting us know that you have sent us some samples, include pictures of the damage in the email. Dr. Lori Eckhardt (eckhalg@auburn.edu) and/or Patricia Gordon (pfg0005@auburn.edu) **Do not use USPS, as they do not deliver directly to our building. Only ship samples between Monday- Wednesday**
8. Samples should be mailed in an appropriate sized box, with padding, or in a padded envelop. Please write on the outside **"Refrigerate Upon Arrival"**.

