

# Preparing and sending samples for diagnosis

## Preparing cultures

- Cultures should be pure, containing one organism only.
- For bacteria and yeasts, prepare by the quadrant streak method, and submit in 90mm Petri dishes.
- For fungal cultures, send in Petri dishes or on agar slopes in bottles or test tubes.
- Use clear glass or plastic containers to permit observation of colonies.
- Malt Agar is recommended for growing fungi and yeasts and Nutrient Agar for bacteria.

## To ensure that your cultures arrive in the best possible condition:

- Send fresh cultures.
- In the case of bacteria send plates with well-separated single colonies for DNA extraction.
- In the case of fungi, send cultures that are 1-2 weeks old.
- Ensure Petri dishes are sealed with tape.
- Check that bottle caps are not over-tightened.
- Fit test tubes with a sterile cotton-wool bung or use tubes with screw-tops.
- Label each isolate with a reference number or code.
- To protect samples in transit, use three layers of containment, one of which should be crush-proof.
- Include sufficient packaging around the samples to avoid movement inside the package.

## If sending dried specimens:

- Specimens (e.g. roots, stems, leaves) should be fully dried before sending.
- Press leaves to avoid curling.
- Submit specimens with sporulating material if possible and send several pieces.
- Attach delicate specimens on to card before sending.
- Place each sample in a separate paper envelope labelled with your own reference number.
- Do not use plastic bags for sending samples as these can cause condensation and result in spoilage.
- Send samples in a crush-proof box to avoid damage in transit.
- Retain a representative collection of each sample as material is not normally returned.

## Photographs

- These are useful to show symptoms on plant material.
- Place in paper envelopes and send with the samples

## Submission forms

A copy of our Identification Request Form for the submission of samples will be provided by email. Please complete this and send with your samples. A copy should also be emailed to: [microbialservices@cabi.org](mailto:microbialservices@cabi.org)

## Package labelling

Packages containing unidentified samples for diagnosis imported into the UK do not require an import licence, however, it is necessary to attach a label to the outside of the package and clearly state each of the following:

- Unregulated, unidentified microbial samples.
- Import of these samples is UNRESTRICTED and no plant health controls are associated with the materials.
- These samples are being imported for diagnostic & scientific research purposes only.
- **APHA Contact:** In the event of any concerns, telephone APHA: 0300 1000 313
- **Emergency Contact:** Include telephone number and email address of your CABI contact.

All paperwork and labelling must be in English.

## The address to send samples is:

CABI, Silwood Park, Buckhurst Road, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 7PY, United Kingdom