

Final plant clinic of the year

The final plant clinic for 2009 will be offered Wednesday, October 28 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Fort Walton Beach at the Okaloosa County Extension Service building, 127 W. Hollywood Blvd.

The plant clinic is not a lecture. It is designed to provide a place and time for people to bring in samples of plants for diagnosis including weeds for identification.

If you have a plant problem that you would like diagnosed, bring a sample of the weed, plant, insect, etc., to the clinic. Be sure to bring a fresh sample that represents what is seen in the landscape. This may include a plant stem with several leaves, a 4-inch square of grass with roots attached, etc. You may also bring a sample of your soil for pH testing.

Here's how to collect the sample.

Collect a composite soil sample by removing subsamples from 10 to 15 small holes dug throughout the sample area (e.g. the front yard). To obtain the subsamples, carefully pull back mulch, grass or ground covers to expose bare soil. With a hand trowel or shovel, dig small holes 6 inches deep and then remove a 1-inch thick by 6-inch deep slice of soil. Combine and mix the subsamples in a clean plastic bucket. Place about two cups of this mixture in a plastic bag or small throwaway plastic container. Close the container. If the soil is wet, let it air dry by spreading it out on newspaper before putting it in the container. Make sure to attach a slip of paper with your name, phone number and where the sample was taken (e.g. lawn, vegetable garden, flowerbed, etc.). If you don't know what type grass you have, bring a sample of it to the plant clinic.

The final plant clinic of the year does not mean that you can't have your lawn, landscape and garden problems solved through the UF/IFAS Extension Office. Master Gardeners staff our building in Fort Walton Beach each Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon to help answer your gardening questions. Our office in Crestview, located at 5479 Old Bethel Road, is open each weekday 8 to 5.

You do not have to use your lawn, landscape and garden areas as an experiment. The research has already been done for you. As a Floridian, you have a wealth of information available through the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension Office.

Next time you have a lawn, landscape or garden question, contact your local UF/IFAS County Extension Office or visit our Solutions for Your Life Website at <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu>.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, October 22, 2009