



## CORNELL NUTRIENT ANALYSIS LABORATORY

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### Instructions for Plant Leaf Sample Collection

#### 1. Time to sample.

*Strawberries:* Sample the first fully expanded leaves after renovation or within the first 6 weeks after harvest.

*Raspberries:* Sample healthy leaves on non-fruiting canes between August 1<sup>st</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Blueberries:* Sample healthy leaves between July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 30<sup>th</sup>.

*Tree fruit:* Between 60 and 70 days after average petal fall date. 30> leaves from this year's shoots.

#### 2. What to sample.

Sample healthy leaves that are well exposed to light. These should represent the average condition of the planting and should not be damaged by: disease; insects; weather or mechanical injury.

**AVOID** mixing leaves from different cultivars.

**DO NOT** mix leaves from plants of different ages.

A minimum of 30 leaves are needed per sample. If possible, each leaf should be taken from a different plant within the sampled area. Since an accurate recommendation is dependent upon a pH reading, we strongly suggest that you test the pH at this time and record it on the appropriate line of your information sheet.

Plants sampled should represent the average condition within the planting unless special samples are being taken to determine cause(s) of a distinct problem or condition.

#### 3. Collecting and handling samples.

Detach leaves and remove the petioles. Place leaves in a dry paper bag or envelope and immediately label the bag so that you will know the area this sample represents. Wash the leaves before they wilt to remove spray residues and dirt. Gently rub the leaves together in a mild detergent solution (dish washing detergent in tap water). See **washing leaf samples (5)** for washing instructions. Place sample into dry paper bag with the top open and let dry at room temperature until the leaves are brittle.

**4. Packaging, payment, and mailing instructions** Enclose sample, submission form and make check or money order payable to: Cornell Nutrient Analysis Lab, 804 Bradfield Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853.

#### 5. Washing leaf samples.

Wash the leaf samples while still fresh, **before they wilt**. If a large number of samples need to be prepared, they may be stored overnight in a cold storage, refrigerator or ice chest to keep them drying out.

Use distilled water, available at most drug stores, for washing and rinsing the samples. Change the water if it becomes dirty **or** after 8 to 10 samples (whichever occurs first). **Gently** and **lightly** scrub the leaves together in a mild detergent solution (most dish washing detergents are satisfactory).

Shake to remove excess water and immediately rinse the sample in clean distilled water. Again shake to remove excess water.

Shake to remove excess water and immediately rinse the sample in clean distilled water. Again shake to remove excess water.

Transfer sample to paper bag, with top open and dry at room temperature until the leaves are brittle.

**NOTE: DO NOT let leaves to stand in water – complete the washing and rinsing process in one minute or less.**

Additional submission forms for download are available on our website: <http://cnal.cals.cornell.edu>.